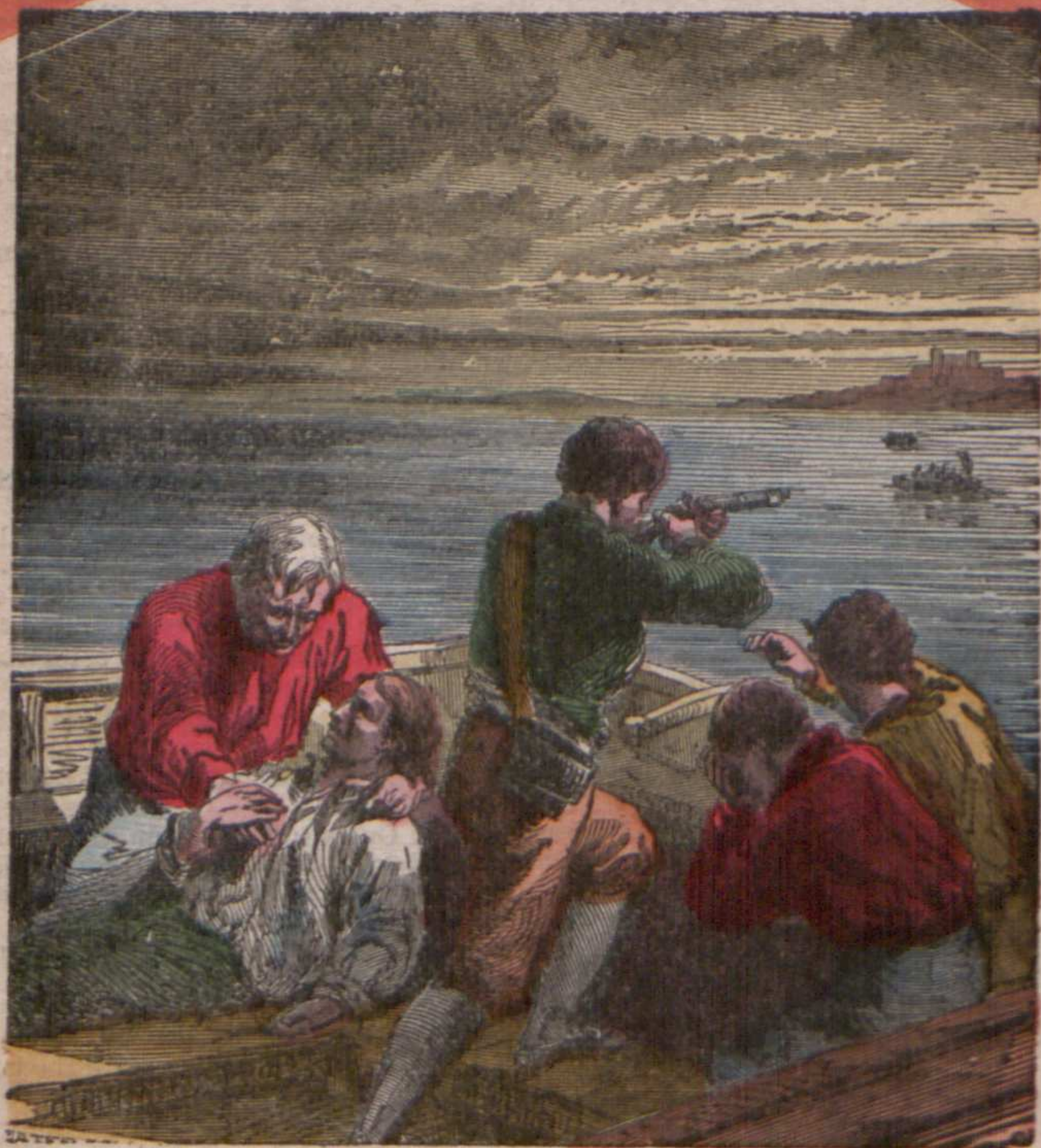


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THE KING'S MAN;

A TALE OF SOUTH CAROLINA IN REVOLUTIONARY TIMES

CHAPTER I.

THE PATRIOT'S BRIDAL.

So did they
Their altar build for liberty that day.—T. H. CHIVERS.

ON a June evening, in the year 1776, there was a brilliant assemblage at the mansion of John Riviere, merchant of Charleston, S. C., to witness the marriage of his niece, Louise Arnoult, with her cousin, his only son, Ernest Riviere.

Old gentlemen were present, shining in bravery of court costume, recalling splendors of the Second George's reign; with flowing white wigs, and vests of crimson—the latter color destined to fall from colonial favor. Old ladies stood erect in stiff brocades and towering head-gear, their high-heeled shoes glittering with diamond buckles. Young gallants sported powdered ringlets and delicate ruffles, their coats heavy with embroidery, and their spotless small-clothes of buff and azure, elaborately worked with gold and silver threads.

While waxen lights shone brightly, and music sounded through the spacious saloons, and the perfume of surrounding gardens was wafted into jalousied casements, the guests disposed themselves into groups, awaiting the bridal ceremony. Two young men, walking apart on a balcony, conversed in a low tone, while apparently observing the animated scene.

"I tell you, Yancey," cried the elder of the pair, "that I will yet be even with them all! Ay!"—he seemed to hiss rather than mutter—"though our fair cousin's hand and wealth are *his*, not mine, I will yet be winner in the game, ———!" The sentence closed with an oath that grated harshly on that scene, though uttered only in a whisper.

"You've got the right pluck, Atnee," returned the other young man; "I said you would carry off your disappointment like a buck, you know! The woman's but a woman, and as for the property who knows what it will be worth to *him*, when our turn comes—eh, Atnee?"

"Hush! But you are right, Yancey. And our turn will come before another night. Curse it, why could not this mummary have been delayed!"

"Do you think, Atnee, that there will be a fight?"

"Doubtless; and 'tis for that reason old Riviere consented to the wedding being performed this evening. Our gallant bridegroom will pass from the arms of love to the arms of—"

"Death, perhaps!" added Yancey, filling up his companion's pause, as he looked him in the face.

"There'd be one rebel less for King George to hang," muttered Atnee, cynically. "We shall have our hands full with these popinjays when the king gets his own again."

"Poor devils!" rejoined his friend, "they're to be pitied, in any case; for if the rebellion could succeed, these new-fangled notions of freedom would end in the loss of all their two-legged property, you know."

"No doubt of that, Yancey! If the Puritan vandals ever get southward, we might have a rump-parliament liberating every black in Carolina."

"And a Yankee conventicle on every plantation, perhaps Roundheads against cavaliers," said Yancey, laughing.

"Exactly—the old quarrel!" rejoined Atnee. "Their nonsense about freedom is only the psalm-smiting fanaticism of more than a century ago, and honestly come by at that; for their fathers fought against ours at Naseby and Worcester. Shame that any Southern cavalier should league with drivellers of Massachusetts Bay!"

"But our Southern Huguenots, you know—"

"Ay!" muttered Atnee, with a malediction. "These French have rebel blood in them, and 'tis their example that disgraces Carolina! We shall let out some of that French blood ere long, Yancey."

"Your uncle and cousin Ernest are true Huguenots, Atnee."

"And need bloodletting, too," muttered the young man, with a significant scowl. "But look! the priest is here, and I must act my part in the farce, as well as others! You shall see, Yancey, how gallant a groomsman your discarded lover can make!"

Speaking thus, the young man turned from his confidant, and advanced lightly into the center of a throng that now gathered in the main saloon. With handsome face arrayed in smiles, and graceful figure bowing to friends on either hand, as he placed himself beside the radiant bridegroom, Robert Atnee would never have been taken for a discarded lover, nor suspected to be, what in truth he was, one of the deepest-plotting Tories in Carolina.

Clad in sacred robes, his wide-flowing surplice depending nearly to the floor, the reverend clergyman now raised his hands and eyes, invoking a blessing upon the nuptials he was about to solemnize. On his left stood Ernest Riviere, his slight but well-knit figure attired in a suit of light-blue, worked with a border of silver vines, and lined

with fawn-colored satin. His square-toed shoes glittered with brilliants. Diamonds clasped his vest, and shone upon his knees, contrasting strongly with the plain black scabbard of his dress-sword, the only ornament of which was a ruby, gleaming upon its pommel.

Near Ernest was his father, and his cousin Robert Atnee, and at his side stood Louise, her heart audibly beating, as she felt the assuring pressure of his hand. She wore a dress of white satin, ruffled with point laces, through which her arms and neck appeared like alabaster. Clusters of pearls were netted in her dark braids of hair, and glistened also among the ringlets that fell in profusion around her polished throat. A necklace of similar gems, interspersed with sapphires, sustained a small cross of gold, and an aigrette of diamonds clasped her girdle, confining the full richness of the bride robes. Just in her nineteenth year, this young girl united a charming simplicity with all the grace of early womanhood—that season of sunshine, when the heart uncloses, flower-like, to drink sweetness from all impressions and surroundings. She was of medium height, her figure slight but modeled with the waving symmetry that we admire in painting or statuary. Her features were calmly expressive, and to a careless observer might indicate too quiet a temperament; but one who looked into her large black eyes, of earnest depth, or marked the thoughtful breadth of her placid forehead, would feel that gentle as she appeared, her nature was capable of courage and endurance.

It was, as has been said, a June evening, laden with balm and perfume. The skies, seen through lattice and embowering pines, were thick with stars, and no presage of storm, or shadow of uprising cloud, interposed to mar the beauty and promise of that quiet night, when Louise and Ernest laid their hands together, pronouncing the solemn words which made them one.

But scarcely had the wedding-ring—emblem of endless love and constancy—been placed upon the bride's taper finger, when a sudden sound, like thunder breaking through the calm atmosphere, startled every guest with its significant vibration. It was the roar of cannon booming and reverberating in sullen distinctness. Many a cheek became pale at the moment, and many hearts stood still, as old and young exchanged glances of import, and a murmur ran from lip to lip:

“The British!”

Ernest Riviere supported the form of his bride, who clung to him convulsively.

“Courage, dearest! remember you are a soldier's wife!” he murmured, pressing a kiss upon her forehead.

“Wife!” The sweet, strange words recalled Louise to consciousness of her new relationship.

“’Tis the enemy's first gun,” said the merchant Riviere. “’Tis the haughty summons of King George cast at us from the cannon's mouth.”

Ernest Riviere heard the words of his patriot father, and felt a

Huguenot spirit burning within his own bosom. Another crash, sounding nearer than the previous one, shook the house-walls, and was multiplied by a hundred echoes through the streets of Charleston. All remained silent but the bridegroom, who lifted his arm, and, as if replying to his sire's last remark, exclaimed :

"*That* is the first gun from Sullivan's Island—the defiant answer of Liberty to the insulting mandate of her foe ! ”

At this moment a quick tread was heard beyond a circle of ebony faces and white teeth which had crowded the open doors of the saloon. The sable janitors made way for the passage of a figure that seemed greatly out of place in that scene of love and peacefulness; for it was that of an armed man, whose iron-shod boots clattered harshly on the threshold, while his heavy saber rattled as he advanced further. He paused in front of the bride and bridegroom, and taking no notice of clergyman, hosts, or wondering guests, drew out a letter from his gauntlet, and, making a military salute, presented the missive to Ernest Riviere, who hastily tore it open.

" 'Tis from— " Old John Riviere pronounced these two words, and remained breathless, awaiting his son's persual of the paper.

" From Colonel Moultrie," responded the bridegroom, in a lower voice; " I am summoned to the fort ! ”

Louise, gazing up bewildered, with cheeks grown pallid and lips parted in terror, felt her strength suddenly deserting her, and with a faint moan, sunk upon her husband's heart. Supporting her with one arm, the young man dismissed the ill-omened messenger by a motion of the hand. " Say to Colonel Moultrie I will attend," he said, in a firm voice.

" At once, Captain ! ” responded the soldier, with another military salute.

" At once ! ” repeated the bridegroom, clasping his insensible wife to his throbbing heart, while a dozen sympathizing women crowded near to assist her.

And now, pealing from church-towers, was heard the sound of alarm-bells. Then followed quick beats of drums, and the note of a single trumpet; presently, the clatter of horse-hoofs in the streets.

Ernest Riviere heard three calls of the trumpet, ere his bride's eyes opened under his misty gaze. The last peal seemed to rouse her from stupor. She flung her arms around the neck of him she held dearest upon earth, and sobbed for a moment with agonizing emotion. Then, controlling her grief, and fixing a glance, lit with high enthusiasm, upon the troubled face of her husband, she murmured, " Go—Ernest—beloved! your country calls you ! ” and fell back into her uncle's outstretched arms.

Ernest pressed one kiss on his wife's lips, as another trumpet call sounded from a distance. The next moment he was gone. Those who listened heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs beneath the balcony, and then receding into the distance Robert Atnee and his friend

Yancey looked out into the still starlight, and the former whispered, "He rides to his death."

"I think so," answered the other, "if Moultrie be fool enough to defend Sullivan's Island."

CHAPTER II.

THE DEFENDERS OF CHARLESTON.

The names of those whose swords have won,
Redeemed the green sod where they lie,
Transmitted still from sire to son,
From heart to heart, can never die!—G. HILL.

HOURS before the bridal and separation of Ernest Riviere and his cousin Louise, a score of anxious-featured men were assembled on a point of land between the town of Charleston and a stretch of marsh and sandy beach terminating at an insulated projection below, called Sullivan's Island. From the slight elevation which this party occupied, a view could be obtained of the wide sweep of channel that extended to the harbor bar, where two confluent rivers formed the roadstead of Charleston.

Sullivan's Island, comprising about three miles of sandy soil, over-run with palmetto thickets and dense growths of myrtle and yellow-jasmin, constituted a natural barrier against the ocean at the opening of Charleston Bay. Lying at the mouth of an estuary into which the two rivers, Ashley and Cooper, mingle their tides, this island commands on one side the whole channel entrance, and on the other is separated from the mainland by a long, narrow strip of shoal and marshy water. On its seaward extremity, at the time of our story's opening, a rough fortification of spiked palmettos and other hastily-collected materials was in process of erection by numbers of patriotic volunteers; boats were plying between the island and shores above, conveying soldiers and supplies; and every effort was apparent on the part of Charleston's defenders to make ready for a vigorous resistance to the approaching British fleet.

The foremost figure of the group to which allusion has been made as gathered on the main shore above Sullivan's Island, was a man of at least forty years of age, who stood upon the edge of the bank, watchful of the coming and going of a line of flat-boats and light barges engaged in the transportation of military munitions. His features wore a bluff, good-humored expression, and an air of soldierly promptitude marked his mien and figure. His hair, thick and long, fell back from an expansive forehead, in a mass upon his shoulders.

Firm lip-muscles and fixed eye evinced a determined spirit and self-reliant character, while a *nonchalance* that appeared natural relieved his manner of all assumption of sternness. This marked individual was Colonel William Moultrie, afterward a Major-General in the patriot service, and immortal in history as the heroic defender of the fortified position which to this day bears his name.

A few paces behind Moultrie stood a man about the Colonel's age, but in physical appearance quite unlike that robust personage. He was low in stature, spare of limb, and sallow in complexion, but his frame had evidently been hardened by endurance and exercise. His eyes were quick and piercing, his forehead marked by lines of thoughtful experience. This man was Francis Marion, a ranger Captain during the Indian wars, and a Major in Colonel Moultrie's regiment.

The moon moved placidly amid her host of starry attendants, casting floods of silver upon the river-banks and placid waters between them. Charleston reposed in great beauty, above all bustle of transportation and warlike preparation. Detached mansions, white-walled and picturesque, contrasted pleasantly with the green darkness of surrounding groves and gardens. A palmetto wilderness filled the background, like a frame inclosing some pictured landscape.

Far down, beyond the fortified island, the British fleet could be descried, it having just succeeded in effecting an entrance over the sandy bars that intersected the channel, between the fortified island and another insulation immediately opposite. The passage on which the hostile ships had entered was narrow and shallow at low tide, and, moreover, ran closely parallel with a hard, sandy beach, that marked the line of Sullivan's Island. On this sandy beach the rampart of palmetto logs, called a fort, seemed hardly yet in condition to sustain a single broadside from the British squadron.

Such was the position of Charleston, and the danger menacing her brave defenders, on the evening of June 27th, 1776. The fleet gathered at her harbor's mouth numbered more than fifty sail, comprising vessels of war, transports, and attendant craft. Two fifty-gun ships and four frigates anchored in front of the palmetto fort, and several thousand regular soldiers were landed from transports upon the long island that lay toward the ocean opposite that called Sullivan's. At daybreak a combined attack by land-forces in boats, and cannonading from the ships, was expected by the Americans, and they made ready, in their humble way, to withstand it.

Then it was that a summons from the British Admiral, launched from a cannon's mouth, was answered by that lowly battery which dared to dispute his advance. Scarcely had the echoes of those opening voices of conflict died in the far-away forests, when the quick ears of Marion and Moultrie caught the tramp of horses sounding at some distance, approaching from the town. They both turned toward General Gadsden, who nodded significantly, remarking:

"It is Lee!"

"Ay, 'tis Lee," said Marion. "He has heard the lion's roar, and the watch-dog's bark in answer."

Moultrie smiled and said:

"The dog will bite as well as bark, Francis, let the General doubt as he may."

He spoke thus in allusion to an opinion that General Lee was believed to entertain, to the effect that no stand could be made against an assault of British war-ships.

Several new figures now collected about the principal persons. Near Major Marion was a man of fine proportions and courageous presence, who leaned upon his rifle, looking downward to the palmetto fort. He wore the frock and leggins of a ranger, and his manly features were shaded by a tasseled foraging cap. Beside him stood a square built negro lad, about fifteen years old, with an intelligent countenance, who attentively surveyed the white-sailed vessels that crowded the harbor's mouth.

"I is sartain sure, Massa Jasper," remarked the black boy, addressing the ranger, "dose ships is gettin' in a trap dat dey won't get out of, de Lord willin'."

The soldier turned his eyes from the fort to the fleet, but made no reply to his sable companion.

"Look dar," persisted the negro, rubbing his hands; "dem boats is landin' Britishers on de Long Hole; and the Long Hole is right under de Sullivan guns. Look dar, Massa Jasper! Jes' you see, Massa Jasper!"

"I see," responded the soldier. "The British troops are disembarking on yonder island, or 'Long Hole,' as you call it. But you forget, Cæsar, the ships are between them and our fort."

"No matter for dat," cried the black, shaking his woolly head. "Dem ships look mighty grand, but Massa Colonel Moultrie, he poke fire into 'em, sartain sure, sar."

"But, Cæsar," said the ranger, "don't you know that the ships carry heavy metal, and that we can only keep them from landing by fighting hard behind our palmetto logs?"

"Ob course, ob course, sar, I knows dat," cried Cæsar. "But nebber mind de heavy metal, Massa Jasper. Colonel Moultrie gib 'em hot shot, sartain sure, sar."

"Pooh, pooh, nigger," interrupted a harsh voice. "The enemy's first broadside will knock that miserable mud-wall to pieces."

Sergeant Jasper, the ranger, and Cæsar, his colloquist, looked up surprised, and beheld a grim, scarred face close by. Both were about to reply somewhat roughly, when a movement of Colonel Moultrie, who had heard the man's speech, anticipated their own.

"What!" he cried, bending a searching look upon the fellow who had uttered the disparaging remark. "You think they will knock our ramparts to pieces? Well, sir, we shall be behind the ruins, and prevent a landing by our bodies."

Marion's eyes glistened, and his sallow cheeks flushed, as this Spartan declaration fell from his senior officer's lips. Jasper lifted his rifle, and brought the stock hard down upon the sward, with a ringing emphasis. Cæsar, the negro, who was Moultrie's own servant, vented his satisfaction in a characteristic half-yell :

"Ha-yah!" he cried, "dar's de way—dar's de way we sarve 'em out—for sartain."

The man thus rebuked averted his scarred face, and turned away, just as a near beat of hoofs upon the bank announced the arrival of General Lee, who, leaping from his horse, grasped the outstretched hand of Colonel Moultrie.

"Colonel Moultrie, that fort can never be successfully defended," were the first words of General Lee, after he had shaken hands. "You will be assaulted at daybreak by the entire British fleet, and have nothing to oppose but a pile of palmetto-logs."

"Moultrie's eyes flashed. "You forget, General," he cried "my men will be behind those logs."

"Still, I council the immediate abandonment of yonder island defense," rejoined Lee. "Recollect, sir, we have to deal with fresh and veteran troops—backed by the cannon of a well-manned squadron."

"But you would not counsel retreat, General?" interposed Gadsden.

"No, sir!" cried the impetuous congress officer. "It is my purpose to oppose their entry to the city with all the forces at my command, and to fight, sir, while a man remains at my side; but I hold it madness to attempt the defense of yonder fort."

"I act under orders from Governor Rutledge," said Moultrie, quietly, "and those orders are to prevent the enemy from *passing Sullivan's Island*."

"Very well, sir!" said Lee, in a chafed tone, and turning away. "I dispute not Governor Rutledge's authority, though it conflicts with my judgment. I shall prepare, Colonel Moultrie, to cover your retreat."

Moultrie inclined his head, with unruffled composure of countenance, and then advanced to meet a troop of horse that approached at a gallop. Among the foremost riders the chief recognized young Captain Pinckney, destined to become like himself a Major-General of the Continental army, with Ernest Riviere and some thirty other youthful volunteers. Riviere had exchanged his wedding coat for military frock, the uniform of Moultrie's command, but still wore his white small-clothes and embroidered waistcoat. Saber and pistols were buckled beneath a blue sash, that had been worked with silver thread by Louise Arnoult, and inscribed with the motto, "Love and our country."

In a brief space all who were destined for Sullivan's Island took their places in flat-boats, bidding adieu to comrades who remained at Fort Johnson and the camp of General Lee.

"When you are forced to give way, Colonel, I shall hasten to protect you," were the last words of that General, in acknowledging Moultrie's parting salute.

"Thank you, sir—if we need assistance," was Moultrie's rejoinder, in embarking, with Marion, Pinckney, and Riviere, in the last boat which left the bank.

General Lee rode away at the head of his staff, and none remained at the landing, save a few straggling citizens, and servants in charge of the horses.

CHAPTER III.

THE ROGUES' INTERVIEW.

Is there no chill upon the warm, fresh current of thy heart?
Do not thy red lips blanch with fear, or pulse convulsive start?

E. W. FISH.

AMONG those who watched the embarkation of soldiers for the fortified island, the reader will recollect that individual who had obtruded his scarred face and unwelcome opinion upon the colloquy of Sergeant Jasper and the negro Cæsar, and had received a signal rebuke from Colonel Moultrie himself. This ill-featured man lingered by the river-side for some moments after the last bateau departed from the upper beach.

He was apparently of middle age, strong-limbed, and of muscular development in chest and throat, and had, without doubt, undergone years of exposure and danger. His complexion was of that bronzed hue which results from constant contact with elemental changes. Boots and breeches clothed his nether limbs, and a slouched mariner's hat and jacket of frieze concealed his upper proportions.

After satisfying what might or might not have been a motiveless curiosity, this man turned from the beach, and walked slowly toward the town—many quivering lips and tearful eyes being averted from his unsympathizing gaze, as he passed groups of citizens on the starry bank. Reaching the streets inhabited by the seafaring population, he paused, near the river's bank, at the last of a number of low, weather-beaten huts, which straggled along the water front. The tenements appeared lonesome, for the embarkation of troops at a point below had attracted the residents of this squalid neighborhood in common with denizens of more refined purlieus. Some few disconsolate-looking females were creeping homeward, after parting from husbands or sons at the lower beach, but the general aspect of the locality was gloomy and deserted.

Matthew Blake opened the door of his hovel, that abutted on a

point of land sheltered by a high wooded bank, round which the river swept in an abrupt curve; so that, in fact, the dwelling occupied a small promontory jutting into the stream. Entering, the man stood in a single room which was far from being so uncomfortable as the forbidding exterior might have indicated. Its single window was, it is true, half obscured by articles of ragged clothing inserted in broken panes; its rafters were black with smoke, and discolored by rain that had penetrated the ruinous roof. But there was, nevertheless, an air of rude comfort, joined with neatness, that could hardly have been looked for in the abode of one like Matthew Blake. Over the rough flooring was spread a fragment of carpet, antiquated in pattern, and nearly threadbare, but of a costly fabric. Near the door was a ship's locker, entire, with mahogany facings, carved intricately, and bearing tarnished patches of gilding; and in a corner of the apartment was another nautical relic sufficiently curious.

This was a merchant-ship's caboose, once a fixture of some East-Indiaman, as was evident from the royal crown and "Company's" arms, which yet appeared in faded colors on its mouldings. It now served the purpose of a bedstead, its front being draped with discolored crimson cloth, looped over a bar of gilt wood. Between the curtain folds, appeared a small bed, gayly adorned with bunting.

The remaining furniture of the apartment was homely enough. A ship's cooking-stove, with a rusty pipe, some stools and a deal table, with a coarse canvass hammock, swinging from the rafters, composed its details. The caboose was the only object calculated to arrest a visitor's glance.

Softly closing the door of the hut behind him, the scarred man moved on tiptoe across the floor, and pausing before the caboose, drew aside its hangings, disclosing an occupant of the small couch—a female child, beautiful as a cherub, and wrapped in profound sleep. As he did so, a remarkable change came over the man's countenance. The sneer left his lip, the scowl vanished from his dark brow, and he seemed to hush his breathing as he bent over the slumberer. Under the light of a swinging lamp which hung from the ceiling there appeared a moist light in his eyes, as if a tear struggled up from their hard corners. Silently gazing, and then softly dropping the curtain, he was turning away from the bed, when a thin pale hand parted the drapery, and again discovered the young child.

In the faint glow of a solitary lamp, the contrast between the two occupants of that hut was an extreme one. The man's massive form, with his shaggy hair massed on his broad shoulders, appeared almost gigantic; while the child, delicately moulded and of scarce five summers, possessed that unearthly loveliness which conveys an indefinable impression that it has no affinity with mortal things. Over her forehead, clear as light itself, a cluster of golden ringlets hung moist and soft, and clung around her pure white neck. It was a wonder of wonders how so gentle a child could be kin to the uncouth figure to whom she stretched out her baby hands.

The man stooped to kiss the lips upturned to his own, and laid his hand tenderly as he might on her silken hair. The child raised her eyes, of a soft, dark, hazel hue, and fixed them lovingly on his face, but her lips murmured no greeting.

For this beautiful child was a Mute !

The illumination of her innocent soul radiated from forehead and eyes, but her affections were voiceless.

Nevertheless, there was strange eloquence in the dumb twining of the little arms about that fierce man's neck, and in the close pressure that he imprinted on her lips, as if he were stamping with a kiss the sole treasure of his existence.

And in the smoothing of her pillow, as the child fell back on her curious couch: and in the look with which he regarded her sweet face, as she lapsed once more to quiet slumber; there was more revealed of the man's heart, than Matthew Blake would have let the world see.

But, dashing his hand across his eyes, they became hard again, and he closed the caboose curtain, as if to shut himself away from another life, and be himself once more.

Matthew Blake took from a shelf an iron candlestick, with a bit of candle in the socket, which he lit at the pendent lamp. Stooping, then, he doubled back one corner of the loose carpeting which covered the floor of his hut, and proceeded to lift a portion of the plank flooring. This effected, a narrow passage presented itself, into which he was about to descend, when a low knock at the hovel-door caused him to start hastily back, restore the planking, and adjust the carpet in its former place.

Muttering discontentedly, as he replaced his candlestick and unbolted the hovel-door, the scarred man demanded gruffly who wanted him outside, and was answered by a low voice, and the hasty entrance of a visitor, muffled in a cloak.

"Hush, she sleeps, wake her not," muttered the host. "What errand now, Master Atnee?"

"Business, Matt," responded the other, throwing back his mantle collar, and disclosing a face both younger and handsomer than that of the scarred man.

"If it be *your* business, we'll talk about it elsewhere," muttered the latter, with a motion of his head toward the caboose. "*Your* secrets are not such as bring good dreams to sleepers."

"Ha! ha! Matt," laughed the visitor, "do you fear that deaf and dumb baby will overhear us?"

"Whatever I fear, I'll go elsewhere to talk of your business, Master Atnee," returned the man, doggedly; to which the visitor rejoined: "Very well, Matt, as you will;" and turned at once to the hovel-threshold.

Locking the crazy front door of his hovel, the scarred man then followed his conductor in silence through the silent streets, under obscurity of trees and house-walls, till they approached that quarter

of Charleston in which were situated many ancient mansions, built by early settlers of the colony. Turning from the main road toward one of these, the two wound their way through an avenue of shrubbery, till they gained a rear building; and the younger pedestrian quickly led the way to a door which admitted them into a lighted apartment.

"Here we can be both at home, without scruples on the score of innocence," remarked the young man, in a sneering tone, as he proceeded to divest himself of hat and mantle, discovering thereby the figure of a man about thirty years of age, with handsome though naughty features, and an air of high breeding. Clad in a costly suit, finely ruffled, he seemed to have just left some gay assembly. His hair was powdered and curled, and fragments of a white rose clung to one of the embroidered button-holes of his silken vest; while flushed cheeks and somewhat glassy eyes betrayed some recent indulgence in wine.

"I'm dry as a redskin, Master Atnee," was the response of Matt Blake to the young gentleman's remark, on entering; whereupon the latter pointed to a case of liquors which stood on a table near by. The guest at once seated himself, and proceeded to inspect the square bottles, and to pour from the contents of one of them, which revealed the pungent odor of Jamaica spirits to his well-pleased olfactories. The host, meantime, threw himself in another arm-chair, and appeared to await impatiently the deliberate motions of his thirsty guest.

The apartment wherein the two were met, was a small chamber, apparently a detached building from the mansion to which it appertained. In fact, it formed a connection between the dwelling-house and a stack of out-houses, containing stables and other offices belonging to the owner of the place. Its single window was barred and closely curtained, but the arched ceiling was pierced by orifices communicating with the outer air, and sufficiently ventilating the interior, which had otherwise been too confined. Little furniture was noticeable, beyond table and chairs, though a variety of weapons, implements of hunting, and articles of clothing hung about the walls. A double-barreled gun crossed a couple of rifles, just above the fireplace, and that aperture itself was filled with saddles, bridles, a game-bag and several knapsacks. On one extremity of the table stood an ebony writing-desk, and the remainder of its surface, saving that portion containing drinking vessels, was piled with a heterogeneous collection of military and naval uniforms, hunting-coats, wagoners' frocks and the like, while a complete aboriginal wardrobe, comprising head-gear, wampum, feathers and moccasins, presented an outfit suitable for any copper-colored Apollo. Interspersed with these things, were maps, drafts and plans of roads or military works, together with pistols, daggers and other offensive armor—a reckless confusion characterizing all, so that they resembled mostly

the paraphernalia of some vagrant Thespian's impromptu dressing-room.

Taking no notice, however, of the disorder around him, the scarred man leisurely filled his glass with rum, and swallowed the fiery beverage at a draught. Then, pushing the flask and glass toward his host, he said, with a smack of his lips: "That was for thirst! I'll drink presently to your health, Master Atnee."

"Drink, in the devil's name," responded the other, curtly; and then be good enough to give me your attention."

"In the devil's name I'll do nothing, Master Robert Atnee," returned the other. "But in the name, and for the sake of this good Jamaica rum, that I now drink your health in, I'll listen to anything you have to say." So saying, the scarred man refilled his glass and raised it to his lips.

"Stop, Matthew," interposed the host, "you shall drink no more till you and I have a few words together. Nay," he added, observing the other's forehead contracting sullenly, "there'll be time to dispute by and-by, and I'll join you in a dozen glasses, Matt. But at the present moment, put down that liquor and listen to me."

The young man spoke in the tone of one accustomed to exact obedience, and the scarred individual responded by setting down his untasted second glass.

"Well, Master Robert—what would you?" he asked, gruffly.

"Listen, Matt; you know that Moultrie and the rest have gone to their mud-castle?"

"I saw the last of their flat-boat squadron, and doubtless the last of the popinjays themselves."

"And, my cousin was among the volunteers. You know that, Mat?"

"The fool, Riviere, who leaves his bride on her wedding night, to lend his body as a merlon for a log-fort. Ay, Master Atnee, I saw your patriotic duncie of a cousin in the boat with his Colonel and the ranger Marion."

Master Robert Atnee leaned back in his arm-chair, and shading his face with one white hand, appeared to regard his companion through the parted fingers. The guest returned this scrutiny by a sidelong glance, which perused the young man's face. The features of Robert Atnee were regular, and might perhaps be termed classic. His forehead was clear and high, his skin transparently fair, with blue veins distinctly traceable. His eyes were blue, his lips full, and curved usually with a haughty expression, which, with firmly-cut nostrils, imparted an almost disdainful air to his whole countenance. Redundant ringlets, silky and soft, fell like gold about his shoulders, as if scorning the powder and ointments wherewith fashion had burdened them. Altogether, the person of Atnee was one which woman might look upon with interest, if not with love.

"You were present at your cousin's wedding, I doubt, Master At-

nee," remarked the young man. "I saw a crowd of gallants and ladies through the hall casements, as I passed down to the beach."

"I was there," replied Atnee; "and 'tis of this I must talk to you. The accursed marriage is over, and Riviere calls the girl his wife."

"'Tis a pity she preferred not a loyal king's man," said the guest. "This rebel Riviere must lose his head ere long, though he survives to-morrow's work, which I venture to say will be of the hottest. Now, had the damsel chosen her other cousin—yourself, Master Atnee, who have sense enough to serve the strongest side—why, she had done a wise act, and—"

"Peace; Matthew Blake," exclaimed Atnee, with a gesture of impatience. "I asked not your opinion as to my cousin's choice. Suffice it, she is the wife of Ernest Riviere, and as such, Matt, do you hear me? I hate her, as I once loved her. Come, drink, and then listen."

The young man hurriedly filled his glass, and his companion, well pleased, grasped his own unfinished goblet. The two vessels clinked together, and Atnee drank and replaced his own upon the table. The scarred man sipped slowly, and remarked: "I am ready to hear what you have to say, Master Atnee."

"You are sure, Matt, that Riviere has gone to Sullivan's Island?"

"If a man's eyes can make sure, I saw him embark. He is long since there, with his fellow-volunteers, who will have a fine game of shuttle at day-break, with Sir Peter's bomb-ketches."

"Matthew Blake," said the host, slowly, "Riviere must never come back from Sullivan's Island."

"That is to say, *alive*," suggested the man, with a keen glance at his companion.

"You are right, Matt. He must never come back alive, to claim his bride and fortune," cried the other, quickly.

"His bride and fortune, eh, Master Atnee?"

"I said so, Matt, and you shall hear all, that you may learn your own interest, as well as mine; yesterday, could I have wedded my cousin, Louise Arnoult, this dunce, Riviere, might have gone his way, and no bad blood would have been between us. To-night, and henceforth, he is my foe, and stands between me and my right. He must die."

"And you marry his widow; is it so, Master Atnee?"

"Marry!" exclaimed the young man, bitterly. "No, Matt Blake, 'tis my inheritance that I must win back, though a hundred craving cousins die in my path to it. Know you what dowry my cousin Arnoult brings to her rebel lover?"

"Doubtless, her father, your uncle, left her well portioned, Master Robert."

"He left her wealth which should have fallen to me," answered Atnee; "wealth that my mother, his own sister, had yielded to him."

when she espoused my father. It constituted the foundation of a large fortune, which he afterward amassed by traffic. Yet his will allowed the chit, Louise, to inherit all, provided she married her cousin Ernest, the son of old John Riviere."

"Your cousin outgeneraled you and gained the heiress," said Matthew Blake, with a laugh.

"Hear me out, Blake," said the host, impatiently. "There was a contingency provided for, a contingency which may occur." He paused, fixing his pale blue eyes upon Blake's countenance. "In case the married cousins die without children, then the property reverts to our branch of the family, through Robert Atnee, its surviving representative."

"Ah," cried the other, quickly. "I perceive your meaning, Master Atnee. And this contingency—"

"I intend to insure, through your assistance, Matt," cried the young man, a fiery gleam lighting up his calm blue eyes.

There was a silence for a few moments between the two men. Each watched the other's face with covert glances, though both were apparently absorbed in thought. The scarred man was the first to ask, in a muttered tone :

"What would you do, Master Atnee?"

"To-morrow will be a bloody day on yonder island," responded the other, significantly. "Many will *fall* behind those mud-ramparts that they call a fort."

"'Tis very likely," said Blake.

"But 'tis possible Riviere may escape; while a hundred fall around him; is it not so, Matt?"

"That's the chance of war, Master Atnee."

"You must prevent such a chance."

"How am I to prevent it, Master Atnee?"

"Do you pretend not to understand me? Riviere must die upon Sullivan's Island. A quick eye and ready hand can find many opportunities in the heat of action."

"It might be done," said the scarred man, pouring out another glass of the potent Jamaica. "And, moreover, the man who did the deed might not live to tell the tale."

"You have risked life before now, for less than you will earn for this service in a friend's behalf, Matt Blake. Come to me to-morrow night with assurance that Riviere is out of my way, and as an earnest of the future, you shall have a thousand pounds."

The mention of this large sum of money caused Blake's eyes to glisten, and he leaned his head upon his hands, in renewed reflection.

"'Tis a round sum, Master Atnee; and your cousin is a rebel, who fights with a halter about his neck. What if he should *not* die? When the king regains the province, your cousin's lands must all be forfeited, and your interest with the royal commissioners—?"

"I have thought of that, Blake.—It may be true, as you say, that lands of rebels will become forfeit; but how know I that some in

triguer shall not bid higher than myself for them? Besides, the king is not yet in possession, and the rebels are. You forget, that now I pass for as staunch a patriot as any rebel of them all. No, no, Matt. I trust no hazard; I play with loaded dice."

The scarred man regarded his companion with a mixed expression of admiration and suspicion upon his dark countenance. "You are willing to pay a high price to insure the contingency of which you spoke, and—Have you considered that the lady, your fair cousin, may be inclined to accept you as a second lord, rather than lose her goodly fortune?"

There was a perceptible sneer in Blake's tone, which his employer did not relish. "What is that to you, Matt?" he demanded, quickly. "I asked not your counsel or aid regarding *her*."

"Oh, I forgot myself," returned Matthew Blake, with a bitter laugh. "You are the gentleman, I am the scoundrel. 'Tis you who plan; I am but the tool to execute."

"Well, well; say no more, Matt," cried the young man. "We know one another, and have no need to quarrel. The fool Riviere stands between me and fortune. You have served me more than one good turn already, Matthew—"

"For which you have paid me," interrupted the scarred man.

"Certainly, Matt; and when this business is accomplished, your fortune, as well as mine, may be made. Come, Matthew Blake, you know the thing can be done securely."

Blake mused a moment.

"A man might be pistoled in the smoke of a cannon," he said, slowly.

"The very plan, Matt, the very plan," repeated his employer, with a quivering voice. "To-morrow, during the fight, in the dense smoke of a gun. The plan is a notable one."

Again Mathew Blake leaned his head upon his broad palm, and appeared to muse; then, looking up:

"'Tis a risk, 'tis a risk," he said. "I can not do it, Master Atnee."

"A risk; you have encountered risks ere this."

"Ay; but I care not to lie all day under broadsides of a British fleet. The cannon-balls will riddle yonder island; and as every bullet must have its billet, who knows but Matthew Blake's leaden pill might be rammed hard down in the throat of Sir Peter's bulldogs?"

Robert Atnee darted a wrathful look at his companion, which that individual met with a stolid stare.

"Are you going to show the white feather, Matt?" asked the *Tory*, in a husky voice.

"Running my neck in a noose, as a matter of business, is one thing," said the bravo. "I know what I'm about, and take my chances. But if I go to that mud-fort, 'tis a dozen to one that I never come out of it."

"Tut, Matt--you are no coward, man."

"Coward or not, I've *that at home*, Master Atnee, which you can not give. So I'll wait for the next hang-dog job you have in store, and let some other good comrade earn the thousand pounds."

With these words, Matthew Blake rose from his seat, and stood with slouched hat in hand, returning the fixed gaze of his host, who had also risen.

"You'll not undertake this, Blake? You fear—"

"No matter what I fear; I'll not go behind the logs of Sullivan's Island."

"And yet you said, Matt, how easy to discharge a pistol, while smoke rolled around."

"What I said I said, Master Robert; but no log-ramparts and mud-bastions betwixt Matt Blake and British broadsides. Good night, Master Atnee."

"Stay! Villain that you are, Matt, there is some design in this refusal! You would betray me! You play a double game!"

"I risk not my life in that cursed fort, for any man's gold or promises," returned the bravo, evasively.

"Dog, you are treacherous! but you leave not this house till I have done with you!" cried the young Tory, rising angrily from the table; for the dogged refusal of the scarred man, who had long been an instrument in his hands, ready to perform the most desperate service, was quite unexpected. But Mathew Blake had already shot back the bolt that fastened the door by which he had entered.

"Good-night, Master Robert," he said. "You may finish the Jamaica at your leisure."

The scarred man then sprung forth into the darkness that encompassed the out-buildings.

CHAPTER IV.

ROBERT ATNEE'S SLAVES.

All that flesh doth cover
Are but slaves sold over
To the master, Time.—MILNES.

CONFOUNDED by the obstinacy of his confederate, and the latter's abrupt retreat, the Tory did not reign his presence of mind till Blake was safely away. He then repented his folly in allowing vexation to hurry him into anger, and, reholting the closed door, remained in an attitude of reflection.

"Some motive is at the bottom of Matt's refusal of a thousand

pounds," he muttered. "'Tis not cowardice in *him*; and as for *treachery* what can he gain by betrayal of the king's cause on the very eve of our triumph? Nevertheless, I must secure him—I must secure him. Ha! I have it!"

Atnee resumed his seat, and appeared to ponder deeply. His curled locks struggled between his white fingers, and were lifted from his forehead, fair as a woman's. But had an eye been near to mark the various shades which darkened his features, the transitions of expression, from that of suspicion or fear to hatred and malignant resolution, it would have seen how strong passions can run riot beneath the heartless beauty of outer seeming. Rising abruptly at length, and clinching his fist above his head, he exclaimed in a husky tone:

"Riviere must not escape! Matt Blake shall not desert me at this pinch! My proud cousin Louise shall never triumph in her minion's return!"

Uttering these words, the Tory began to divest himself hastily of his fashionable attire, exchanging velvet garments for a complete suit of the regimental uniform then used by the provincial militia in the Carolinas, and fixing on his lapels a knot of blue ribbons, worn by Whigs to distinguish their sentiments on occasions of public demonstration. Placing a three-cornered hat upon his head, and buckling a sword-belt around him, he left the room by another door, opposite the one through which his late visitor had been admitted, and emerged into an obscure passage, which he followed till obstructed by another door. This he opened, with a key that he carried, and entered upon a wide hall, terminating in a spiral staircase. Ascending this to the floor above, the Tory presently reached another passage which led to a spacious gallery, furnished sumptuously in the style of that period. Massive chairs of black walnut, mirrors heavy with gilded carvings, and paintings in oval frames, were the objects calculated to strike a stranger's attention on entering; and the pictures—principally of cavaliers and ladies—bore a general likeness to one another to confirm the observer that they were ancestral representatives of some ancient colonial family. The windows were open, but the cool night-air was permitted to enter through the net work curtains wrought in various shades and patterns. Waxen candles burned upon an antique table near one of the windows; and seated near were two females, who rose as Robert Atnee abruptly strode into the apartment.

Robert Atnee was an orphan like his cousin, Louise Arnoult, and in point of worldly possessions had, a few years previous, equaled the heiress of his uncle's wealth. But ten years of dissipation, during long sojournings in European capitals, had been sufficient to squander the greater portion of his own inheritance; so that, at thirty, the spendthrift found himself narrowed in income to an

noying degree. The yearly rents accruing to entailed property in the province, though not of large amount, might still have been ample to meet the wants of a less extravagant liver. But from his early youth, and even before the demise of an indulgent mother, his last surviving parent, Robert Atnee had been his own master, and, as a consequence, badly served. At the present time, though not pecuniarily involved, he reflected ruefully upon that prospect in the future; and, being both artful and unprincipled, neglected no opportunities that offered reparation to his willfully shattered fortunes.

Such was Robert Atnee at the time he was introduced to the reader. Ambitious, but calculating, he had taken no prominent part among those who contended for king or colonies in the struggle now going on in his native province. He concealed his predilections, which were all on the mother country's side, and shrewdly temporized with the prevailing Whig spirit, by mingling with patriots, and contributing, in some measure, to the funds raised for provincial defence. At the same time, doubting not that British force must soon crush the rebellion, he maintained a secret correspondence with royal officials, both in Carolina and Virginia, and devoted himself covertly to the enemy's service, by keeping watch upon and disclosing the patriotic counsels of unsuspecting Whigs.

Such men as Robert Atnee were the most dangerous foes that lovers of liberty were called upon to contend against. They inspired confidence which they continually betrayed. Many, indeed, of these secret traitors pursued their machinations throughout the entire war, and, after its termination, contrived to conceal the fact of their ever having been other than true, self-sacrificing patriots.

Unscrupulous, however, as Atnee was in the means to which he resorted—as has been seen by his proposition to Matthew Blake—still his ulterior schemes were subordinate to powerful ambition. He looked forward to opportunities for rendering himself of no small importance as a royal agent in repressing colonial sedition, and sought in his traitorous correspondence, not only to magnify his devotion to British interests, but to enlarge upon the risks which he incurred should his adherence to King George be discovered by the Whigs. In this way he doubted not that he could create powerful regard among those whom he appeared to serve disinterestedly: and such regard he resolved should be turned to his ultimate personal advancement. We will now pass from the Tory's character and revert to his presence, and to the females who rose to greet his entrance in the pictured gallery.

The elder of the two women was a negress; the younger of African extraction, but with few characteristics of the race, and both were slaves belonging to Robert Atnee's household. The negress had been a house-servant in days long anterior to her present master's birth, and had attended him during infancy and earliest childhood. The girl was her grandchild, now sixteen years of age, gracefully formed, and with scarcely a negro trait save her complexion, which was

only a shade darker than that usually belonging to brunettes of a Southern clime. Large slumberous eyes, fringed with heavy lashes, small, finely-shaped mouth, and teeth like pearls, were features of attraction, indeed, which many pure-blooded dames might envy; and the brown sun-tint that flushed through her transparent skin, illumined them all with a warm life that European veins could never quicken into such rich expression. The girl was clad in white, and wore no ornaments but a broad gold ring on her fore-finger.

When Atnee crossed the gallery threshold, his young slave sat with her grandame near the open casement, through which a balmy breeze arose from gardens beneath. She was busy embroidering a military sash; her head bent slightly, disclosing the turn of a polished neck. Rising to acknowledge the master's presence, her eyes remained downcast, but her shoulders, and all that was visible of her face, became suffused with crimson.

"Well, mother Galtan," said the young Tory, advancing to the table, and addressing the old woman, without notice of her grandchild, "I come to talk with you, good *ma bonne*, my good nurse."

The negress courtesied, wheeling forward a large arm-chair with officious attention, and remaining standing like her companion, till their master threw himself upon the cushions. This old woman was evidently of no inferior type of the African race. She did not possess the disagreeable lineaments, noticeable in Congolese or Guinea tribes. Her color, indeed, partook of that olive shade which marks the Mauritanian race; and doubtless she belonged to some branch of those numerous mixed families inhabiting the upper regions of Ethiopia, upon the border of Fezzan. In fact, it was a customary boast of Marguerite, or Galtan, as she was familiarly called, that her fathers had been princes, and made war against white men. Whatever her origin, it was known that she had been brought to America, in youth, and that she retained memories of superstitious teachings, and still practiced ceremonies, that were obviously of Mohammedan association. She was accustomed to mutter her prayers at sunrise, looking eastward, and to cherish a belief in the efficiency of ablutions, which was certainly a virtue in her domestic position. But, there was likewise much in the old slave's character to back her claims to superior birthright; a haughtiness at times, and a spirit in her bright black eyes, which suited ill the station of a menial. Her figure, too, erect in age, as it had probably been stately in youth, would have furnished evidence of noble blood, if coupled with the Soan rose or Celtic lily in cheek and brow.

"Shall Fillippa remain?" asked the old nurse, glancing at her granddaughter, whose eyes were riveted upon her embroidery.

"No—let her go," said Atnee, in response; and with a wave of her hand the grandame dismissed the girl, who, with still downcast eyelashes, courtesied to her master, and glided noiselessly from the gallery.

"How old is Fillippa?" asked the master, with a careless glance

after her retreating figure. The negress pondered a moment, and then answered :

“ Sixteen years, Master Robert.”

No clipping of syllables, such as made up the usual *patois* of her class, was apparent in the old slave's speech, though her voice faltered somewhat in replying to her master.

“ A tall child for her age,” remarked Atnee. “ I was asked to sell her, yesterday, Gattan.” As he said this, the master noticed that the old woman's countenance fell visibly. “ But,” he continued, with emphasis, a smile wreathed his handsome mouth, “ I refused a large sum—a very large sum of our Filippa.”

The negress clasped her hands together, and pressed them to her breast. There was more significance in this mute manifestation of feeling than could have been conveyed by a thousand words. “ Master—master ! ” it seemed to say, “ you will not ask Gattan to part with her grandchild ? ”

“ I do not forget, nurse Gattan, that you saved my life,” resumed Atnee. “ 'Twas you who cared for me when every one—even my own mother—fled from my bedside.” The Tory alluded to a contagious fever that had nearly terminated his existence in childhood, and from which he had recovered only through the untiring devotion of his slave attendant. “ So, *ma bonne*, I must ask your advice in this matter; though, in sooth, our little Filippa would bring a round sum—a very round sum, Gattan.”

“ Master Robert ! ” cried the negress, her eyes filling with tears, as she regarded the young man's countenance, so fair and apparently truthful. A sob choked all further speech, whereupon Atnee lowered his voice to a whisper :

“ Gattan,” he said, “ the cousins are wedded ! My mother's wealth, that should be mine, goes henceforth to smooth-faced Ernest Riviere.”

“ They are wedded, Master Robert ? ” repeated the slave-nurse. “ Ah ! had your mother lived, Master Arnoult would never have forgotten you.”

“ 'Twas my mother's fortune which enabled him to amass the wealth he left behind,” said Atnee, bitterly. “ What right had he to leave his sister's child a beggar ! ”

Gattan started. “ Who is a beggar, Master Robert ? ” she asked, quickly.

“ Who ? ” echoed the Tory, with a passionate start. “ I, your master—the heir of rich old Marmaduke Atnee—I sit here this night, a beggar, almost, at my prime of life.” He paused and struck his forehead, while Gattan regarded him with a look of amazement. “ Ay ! look at me, *ma bonne*,” he continued, vehemently, casting back the curls from his pale brow, with a hollow laugh. “ You do not know how I have flung away hoards of gold, and scattered broad acres in dust. But I say to you now, that pleasure-seeking and

dice-rattling have played ducks and drakes with your old master's wealth, and his son's inheritance."

Making this confession with reckless tone and manner, Robert Atnee threw himself back on the cushion, and watched the effect of his words on Gattan, who had listened with speechless anxiety, clasping her withered hands together. The negress remained with fixed attention for some moments ere she broke the silence:

"Master Robert—dear Master Robert," she exclaimed, "is all lost? Master Marmaduke's property gone—all gone?"

The accents of real affection in which these simple words were uttered, caused a smile to flit on the Tory's lips; and he replied, quickly:

"As for that, Gattan, I hardly think we're quite so destitute. We have Laurelwood and our town-house left, *ma bonne*. I am not exactly a beggar, but, money is confoundedly scarce these times, or I should never think of selling Filippa."

The old negress rose, with her hands still clasped, and stretched them toward her master:

"Oh master! dear master!" she cried, in a husky voice, "if Filippa must be sold, Gattan will die."

Atnee regarded his slave for a moment with a stealthy glance, and then muttered impatiently: "Well, well, Gattan, never mind, she's not sold yet." He turned, and abruptly left the gallery.

The negress remained as if in stupor, till the light pressure of her granddaughter's hand aroused her: "Quick, mother—I must follow Master Robert," whispered the quadroon, hurriedly. And drawing the old woman after her, the girl opened a narrow door, near the table, and disappeared into an inner apartment whence she presently emerged entirely metamorphosed.

Instead of the white dress she had worn, the quadroon had donned a masculine frock, and appeared to be a handsome lad of twelve years. The frock was blue, and beneath she wore trowsers of cotton jean. Slippers and a skull-cap completed the *ensemble* of a sprightly boy. Thrusting a pistol in her coat bosom, she kissed the old woman, and turned to depart.

"Take care, Filippa, of the ring."

"Never fear, mother," answered the quadroon, lifting her finger with the gold circlet to her lips. "A slave's last friend is in it, you know," she murmured, significantly, and then darted away.

When Gattan was alone again, she clasped her withered hands together, and wrung them up and down. "Poor Filippa—poor baby," she murmured. "She loves, and she is a slave! God help her! The ring may indeed be her last friend, poor child."

CHAPTER V

A NIGHT OF ADVENTURE.

Oh! how will sin engender sin.—COLMAN,

THE disguised Filippa emerged from Atnee's house, traversed the star-lit avenue that skirted it, and hurried on, till at a turn of the highway, she caught a glimpse of her young master's figure at a distance. With a joyful exclamation, she quickened her steps.

The Tory pursued his way, unconscious that he was followed so closely, and in the space of half an hour reached the outposts of Lee's camp. Answering the challenge of a sentinel, he penetrated a piece of woods, where he was soon after joined by a man who wore a uniform of the patriot service.

"Punctual!" was Atnee's brief salutation, to which the soldier replied, in an agitated voice:

"I'm running a heap o' danger, Captain."

"Hush! no more than your betters do," rejoined Atnee. "What have you learned new, sir?"

"That the General opposes Moultrie, and thinks he'll be defeated."

"I knew that, hours ago, Samuel Pappett. You are behind the age, my good fellow."

"All I know," said the other, sullenly, "the General has just issued orders to our raw recruits to hold themselves ready to cover Moultrie's retreat."

"Pish!" cried Atnee, impatiently. "What papers have you?"

"Here is a letter from General Washington that our General mislaid, and a map of the Floridas, with some plans about an expedition that I found in his orderly's pocket."

Atnee snatched the documents from his emissary's hand, and thrust them into his bosom.

"I hope you'll not forget to mention me to Sir Henry when he lands. Indeed, sir, this business is dangerous, and—"

"Never fear, sir. You shall be mentioned."

"Because you know, Captain, I'm risking my life."

"I know your sacrifices, Samuel Pappett," returned Atnee, "and your fidelity to the cause that pays best."

"That's hard, Captain—I'm a loyal king's man, and if I am found in the rebel camp by Sir Henry, you know—"

"I'll see to that, sir, and as I want your assistance outside, I'll obtain you a furlough to-night."

"Oh, thank you, Captain," cried the spy.

"Now, go to your quarters, Pappett; I have a visit to make to some officers."

Waving his hand abruptly, Robert Atnee passed on through the clump of woods, and the spy slunk off in another direction. Immediately afterward, another man clad like Pappett in the patriot uniform, crept from under some brushwood that afforded him concealment, and turned toward the sentinel's post.

"What luck, Tom Irvins?" asked the sentry, recognizing his fellow-soldier. "Did you discover any thing?"

"That sneaking Pappett has given the other man some papers, but they conversed too low to be overheard. I'm bound to have those documents, howsomever, before I sleep to-night."

"Will you give information to the Colonel?"

"And get snubbed for my pains?" quoth the soldier. "No sir. I'll find the fox track before I am a dorg. If Pappett's playin' possum in the camp, them papers'll tell the story, and them papers I'm gwine to have afore bedtime. If the papers turn out all right and patriotic, Tom Irvins is a jackanapes—Tom Irvins will be court-martialed as a meddler; but if they be all wrong, then Tom Irvins has started the right trail, precisely. Now I'm gwine down to the creek to play Injin."

"Lie in ambush, eh, Tom?"

"Precisely."

"Countersign, Tom."

"I've got it—all right, comrade," answered the continental, whispering the words; and then, passing the outpost, he sauntered leisurely down the road, which, skirting a wooded bank, lay half in moonlight and half in shadow.

But he had not proceeded far, ere he was himself followed by another figure. It was that of the disguised quadroon, Filippa, who, having concealed herself near the sentry, had heard a portion of his conversation with Tom Irvins, and, watchful for her master's safety, resolved to track the soldier on his path.

The creek, of which Irvins had spoken, spanned by a narrow bridge, crossed the wood about a quarter of a mile from the outposts; and selecting a spot for his hiding-place near the bridge-head, the patriot soldier awaited the return of Atnee, while, concealing herself at the edge of a palmetto thicket, the Tory's slave overlooked the ambuscade.

An hour passed, and Robert Atnee appeared, followed by the spy Pappett. The two passed closely by the thicket which sheltered Filippa, and the next moment reached the creek. Presently a short cry broke the stillness of the night, and the figure of a man darted swiftly across the bridge. Filippa saw that it was the spy, and darting forward, beheld her master struggling with the soldier who had waylaid him. Both stood upon the frail bridge, striving for the

mastery; but it was apparent that Atnee was no match for his antagonist. Filippa reaching them, heard her master's gasping voice:

"What do you want?" cried the Tory, whose neck was tightly compressed by the soldier's strong arms. "Would you murder me?"

"Submit quietly, or you may force me to do that," replied the man sternly; and with a sudden effort he threw Atnee upon his back.

"Let me go—I have money! my purse—my watch."

"You infernal Tory! do you take me for a footpad? No sir! you are my prisoner, and must go to the camp, with those papers that the rascal Pappett stole for you. I've a mind to cast you into the creek for that speech of yours, for I'm a whig, and not to be bribed, my good sir."

While uttering these words, Tom Irvins had placed his knee upon the prostrate man's breast, and was drawing a stout cord from his pocket, wherewith to pinion his prisoner's arms. At this juncture a stealthy footstep upon the bridge caused him to turn his head, but the alarm was too late. Filippa's pistol, pressed against his breast, was the next moment discharged, and the patriot soldier toppled heavily from the log-bridge into the dark water below. Robert Atnee was saved, and sprung to his feet, while yet the reverberations of the pistol-shot were ringing in the woods. He caught one glimpse of a boyish figure darting down the road, and disappearing in the shadows; then, dashing the hair from his eyes, he reeled to the bridge-edge, and peered down into the creek. A struggling sound and choked groan arose therefrom, and presently all was still.

"He will tell no tales," muttered the Tory. "By the fiend! 'twas a narrow chance. Curses light on that treacherous Pappett. 'Twas no shot of his that came so opportune."

Thus communing with himself, the Tory hastened on, apprehensive that the pistol-shot might have alarmed the neighboring outposts. Approaching the city streets, he overtook his late comrade Pappett, cowering by the roadside.

"Cowardly knave!" he exclaimed, "you deserted me."

"Forgive, Master Atnee," gasped the spy, who yet shook with fright. "I was not master of myself, for that devil of a ranger, Tom Irvins, has long watched me, so that when—"

"A truce with your explanations *now*, sir," said Atnee, contemptuously. "Your devil of a ranger will trouble us no more. But if you attempt another desertion like this, you lily-livered varlet, I promise that you'll lie cold as he does. Now, sir, to the business we have to do, but beware of showing the white feather again."

Atnee strode forward; and Pappett trod mechanically in his footsteps, till they gained a curve of the river-street where stood that collection of hovels before described as the quarter where resided Matthew Blake. The hours had now advanced beyond midnight, and the city was wrapped in silence, though probably few eyes were closed this night in sleep. The Tory stopped before Blake's hut, and

beckoned to his companion to approach, and peer through the chinks of a broken shutter, that permitted a glimpse of the interior, discovering the curtained caboose, lit by the swinging lamp.

"The child, is in that cot," whispered Atnee. "You have but to effect an entrance and snatch her from under the curtain. Being deaf and dumb, she can neither hear nor give an alarm, as you carry her off."

"The shutter—is it fast?" responded the spy, applying his hand to the frail casement, which nearly yielded to his first pressure.

"But—if the ruffian, as you say he is—if he should return," faltered Pappett.

"Am I not here to apprise you?"

"But if he bring others—if he should come on us unawares," cried the spy, hesitatingly.

"Will you never have done with your cowardly ifs, sir? The man will not trouble us, for I know his habits and that he seldom returns before day-break. Are you resolved to thwart me, sir?"

"I will do your will, Master Atnee. I did not refuse," murmured the spy, as he noiselessly drew away the shutter-hasps from its rotten socket, and exposed the shattered window, stuffed with rags.

"Stay. Have you an ague-fit, man, that your teeth chatter thus? Stand back here—I will enter myself. But if your cowardly heart leads to another desertion like the last, I swear, Samuel Pappett, that your reward from Sir Henry, when he lands, shall be a hempen-knot tied by the provost-marshal."

With this whispered threat, Atnee thrust his timid accomplice aside, and tearing out the rubbish from a broken pane, quickly succeeded in raising the narrow window sufficiently to enable his hand to reach the key that secured the hovel-door. Bidding Pappett to keep watch outside, he then boldly entered the single apartment.

It presented the features already familiar to the reader; and Atnee, who was no stranger there, glided at once to the caboose to pursue his design of abducting the bravo's child. But ere he laid his hand upon the curtain, a hurried glance about him caused the intruder to pause suddenly in his design. He discovered the carpet-straps rolled together in a heap, and a dark aperture gaping like a grave in the flooring beyond. Startled at the sight, he paused a moment, irresolute, then recalling his self-possession, drew near, and discovered a narrow flight of steps descending apparently to some vault below the hovel. Peering into the opening, he caught a glimpse of light struggling through the darkness below, and suspected that Matt Blake was engaged in some nocturnal operation, which he determined should have, if possible, a witness. Acting on this thought, the Tory cautiously descended the mildewed steps, his feet slipping on a bed of clay beneath, and entered a narrow excavation that appeared to slope upward. Steadying his footing, by stretching out his hands to the clammy sides of this passage, he crawled forward through a wider gap, which opened upon a cavernous vault, damp and chilly. He

divined at once that this subterranean chamber was under the wooded bank which, as before said, intervened between Blake's hut and the river, that here curved abruptly.

But the Tory's interest became riveted the next moment by another discovery. He saw Matt Blake kneeling on the ground, apparently absorbed in the contemplation of a small, iron-bound oaken chest, which was open before him. The chest was full of gold coins, trinkets, and jewels, which, in the rays of a candle glimmering beside it, flashed with dazzling splendor. Rich necklaces of diamonds and pearls, brooches, rings and pendants, watches, jewelers' miniatures, and even wedges of solid gold, were mingled promiscuously in such profusion, that the spendthrift Atnee, in surveying them, felt his breath grow short with eager admiration. Matt Blake crouched over the whole like one of those fabled gnomes which are said to guard the buried treasures of earth; and as he handled the ornaments with gloating fondness, his hoarse voice syllabled monotonously his passing thoughts.

"Ha, ha!" muttered the man, "this is the stuff that rules both Whigs and king's men. What would King George himself be without it, and where would be yon Congress troops, with no dollars to pay for their patriotism?" He smiled grimly as he held up a costly necklace in the candle's rays. "Ay, ay," he went on, "ye're shining as if there was no blood on ye; and yet I saw ye once on a neck as white as Alice's."

Matt Blake's features contracted as the memory of some past crime smote him for a moment. Dropping the necklace, he held up a diamond ring, that sparkled like an eye in the darkness. "A delicate finger wore ye once," he said, "a proud lady kissed ye, and plead for her love-token, and vowed she'd never part with it. Sure enough she kept it till the breath left her fair body, and now it's Alice's—Alice's."

The bravo's hard face softened, and his harsh voice trembled in pronouncing the name of that unconscious child whom he had left in innocent slumber. "'Twas for her," he muttered, with an oath, "and she shall never know how she comes by them. 'Twas for her mother I trod the bloody deck, and nailed my black flag to the mast-head, till I lost her—lost the only one that ever cared for Matt Blake the buccaneer. And now, her child shall have all. Alice will remember Matt, when he's past praying for. Poor dumb chick—poor dumb chick!"

The wretch hid his face with his hands and a tear stole between his fingers, dimming the jewel that he held. His back was turned to the cave-entrance where cowered the concealed Tory, but the latter could perceive the man's heavy frame shake with emotion. A sudden thought crossed the mind of Robert Atnee; a thought of the ease with which a single blow or shot might secure the possession of that, the pirate's ill-gotten hoard; but the next instant a movement of Blake to close his oaken casket, caused the Tory to shrink back

into the narrow passage. He lingered, however, till he beheld the bravo lock and double-lock the box, and thrust it far into a crevice of the wall, then with noiseless speed he retraced his steps to the hovel.

Pappett, the spy, obedient to his patron, had taken his post as sentinel outside, and being, as we have said, a coward of the first water, but cunning withal to a remarkable degree, he ensconced himself in the bush-covered bank which joined the hut, in order at once to overlook the moonlit street and river bank, and to screen himself from any casual observation.

But he had scarcely secured his position among the thick leaves when he became aware of a phenomenon which caused the perspiration to ooze in large drops from his trembling body. This was a faint, greenish light, apparently emanating from the bank itself, a few feet from the spot where he had fixed himself. It was dim and flickering, but distinct enough to infuse Pappett with vague apprehensions. By degrees, however, observing no augmentation of the light, the spy grew venturesome, and ascertained that it proceeded from a small fissure in the bank, overhanging the water's edge—a fissure scarcely broader than his hand's width, but evidently connecting either with a hollow in the hillock or the interior of the hut which he was guarding. This discovery caused Pappett new alarm, and some minutes elapsed before he could muster courage to remove a tangled mass of undergrowth sufficiently to admit of his head being depressed toward the opening. The clammy earth, in contact with his forehead, sent a chill through the man's blood, but at this moment a clinking sound, as of gold, awakened all his faculties. Curiosity and avarice were both stimulated, and Pappett began to scoop away the dirt, in order to widen the crevice. The light glimmered more steadily, and in a moment more, the eager spy was able to discern a cave below, in which the figure of a man appeared kneeling beside a box of glittering treasures. A dazzling array of jewels and money heaped together flashed on Pappett's sight with a splendor that almost deprived him of his senses. His brain swam, and for a moment he lost the power of vision. Recovering instantly, he saw the man below in the act of closing the box, and pushing it far into a recess of the clay wall. Next moment, all was dark in the cave, and he heard his own name called from the hovel-door:

“Pappett—villain! where are you?”

The spy recognized Atnee's voice, and emerged from his covert in time to see his employer dart from the hut, and dash along the street, bearing a burden enveloped in his mantle.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OUTLAW'S CHILD.

A rude, dark, stormy man was he,
His passions like his deeds were wild;
But yet he loved that stricken child.—B. ASKE.

“ALICE ! Alice ! my child ! my child !”

The utterance of these words sounded like a shriek in Matt Blake's mouth, as he discovered the loss of his child. Returning from the cave, unsuspecting of what had taken place during his absence, he had busied himself for some moments in replacing the plank and carpet of his flooring, and making ready for the night's rest in his solitary hammock. It was not till a half-hour, at least, had gone by, that he lifted the curtain of the caboose, in order to kiss, as usual, his slumbering child. The derangement of the bed-clothes, the absence of his little one, struck the father, at first, with a blank amazement, which was speedily succeeded by horror and fury. He ran around the room like a wild man, paused at the spot where he had removed the plank, as if fearful the child might have fallen into the gap during his absence; then, suddenly dashing to the door, he discovered that, though once closed, as he had left it, the key-bolt had been shot back; and a single glance at the open window-shutter showed how the abductor had gained entrance.

Then it was that, with a cry more like the howl of a tigress robbed of her young, than of a human being, the bravo called on his child's name, and throwing himself on his knees beside the caboose, bowed on its pillow, clasping that inanimate object, as he repeated: “Alice my child ! my child !”

It was indeed a powerful love that this bad man cherished for his helpless offspring; a love intertwined, as it were, with every fiber of his heart; the same species of affection that a wild animal entertains for its young, changing not the furious instincts of its kind, but only intensifying their natural purposes. Matt Blake arose from his knees with a sullen scowl and gleaming eye, and opening an old chest, took from it a brace of pistols, which he set himself down to load. This done, he deposited them in a pocket of his rough coat, and with them concealed a broad-bladed knife sheathed with leather. Then, turning a last moody look at the deserted caboose, he crossed his threshold, locked the door mechanically, and strode gloomily through the silent streets, directing his course toward the house of Robert Atnece. Passing to the rear of the Tory's mansion, he gained

the private door and knocked loudly. It was opened at once by Atnee, whose smooth smile greeted him as he entered in surly silence.

"Well! Matt, you look wild," said the Tory, closing and bolting the door. "But you have come to renew good fellowship, I doubt not; so sit, and fill up a goblet."

Matt Blake did indeed step to the table and clutch a glass which he filled with the crimson spirit. But, instead of drinking, he dashed its contents to the floor.

"So may blood run between us," cried the bravo, "till you give me back my child."

The Tory's handsome face blanched for a moment, as the eyes of Blake, burning like coals of fire, were fixed upon his own; but he had calculated his course, and knew the man with whom he had to deal. Therefore, he answered with a renewed smile, and cried;

"Tut, tut, Matt; you were not wont to spill good liquor thus—"

"I want no rum, Atnee; I want blood—*your* blood, and I'll have it."

Answering thus, the bravo sprung upon the Tory, and grasped his neckcloth with a grip like iron, bearing him backward, till he reeled to the floor.

"Matt! Matt!" gasped the Tory, "would you kill me?"

"My child! Alice! my child!" replied Blake in a terrible tone. "Robber and kidnapper, give me back my Alice."

He drew the broad-bladed knife from its scabbard, and lifted it over Atnee's breast, which was pressed by his knee.

"Ay, Master Atnee; as there is a hell for both of us, I will murder you if you give me not back my child."

"Matt Blake, are you mad. Release me," cried the Tory, making ineffectual struggles to rise, his neck compressed by the bravo's gripe almost to strangulation.

"You have stolen my child, to get me in your power; to force me to work your will on Riviere. But I'll slay you like a dog, if you give her not back."

Blake hissed these words between his teeth, as he lifted the knife for a blow, and Robert Atnee, writhing under his burning eyes, almost gave himself up for lost. But the Tory's presence of mind did not desert him. Suddenly relaxing his limbs, and letting his head sink heavily, he murmured:

"Kill me, Matt Blake, and never behold your child again."

Thus speaking, he fell supinely on the floor, as if incapable of further resistance. The impending blow of his antagonist descended not, and Matt Blake appeared to hesitate. Atnee's submission disconcerted him. Supposing her abductor slain, would that restore the child? He withdrew his hand from the young man's throat.

"Get up, Master Atnee," he muttered, savagely, "and answer me like a man."

The Tory had calculated the effect of his stratagem, though it was indeed a forlorn hope. He arose with reeling brain, and seizing his

own untasted spirits, swallowed a few mouthfuls to moisten his dry throat. Blake watched him gloomily.

"Well, Matt," said the young man, as he adjusted his neck-cloth and wiped his forehead, "now that you are no longer frantic, perhaps we can understand one another. What has happened to you?"

"Do you ask, Robert Atnee?" demanded the father, quite crazy with suppressed fury, in observing the other's composure. And he muttered between his teeth: "Oh, you deep villain."

"Matt Blake, I sympathize with you, and promise to aid you to the best of my ability in recovering your child, if you, in return, promise to keep your fingers off my throat, and—"

"Where is she? Atnee! devil—I know not what to call you—where is my Alice?"

"You have scratched my neck and torn my frill shockingly, Matt," returned the Tory. "Nevertheless, I bear no malice, and if you take care of my cousin, in the fort to-morrow, there'll be no harm come to your Alice, I give you a gentleman's word on it."

"And if I refuse?"

"Then," answered the young man, with a look of cold determination, "I believe your child lost to you beyond recovery."

"Atnee, I'll—"

The bravo appeared about to spring again upon his prey but the other only rejoined,

"Matt, you know me. Had I died five minutes since, you would never have beheld your Alice in this breathing world again."

A shudder shook the outlaw, as he heard these words, and marked the expression of Atnee's features. Seating himself again, he poured out a glass of spirits, and said, as he drank it:

"I'll drink with you, Master Atnee; I'll do your devil's work once more; and if I wronged you I'm sorry. But—" he paused, with the glass at his lips, and muttered in measured tones with a terrible oath: "if you deceive me, or harm that child, I'll have your heart's blood, Atnee, wherever you are."

The Tory's bold eye fell before the fiercer glow that shot from beneath Matt Blake's brows. But he mastered his uneasiness, and stretched out his hand to his confederate: "Let us be friends again, Matt," he said, coaxingly; "you and I ought never to part in anger. All shall be well between us, when you come back."

Blake took his employer's hand, and drank his liquor at a gulp. But the scowl left not his brow for a moment; nor did he return Atnee's smile. He went out into the night again, to seek the fort at Sullivan's Island, and to earn a thousand pounds for the deed he was to do; but he hated Robert Atnee more than him who was to be his victim.

CHAPTER VII.

SULLIVAN'S ISLAND, 1776.

The flash, the smoke, the artillery roar,
The answering volley, from front and rear;
The wounded, slain, the bloody gore,
Yet not a thought of fear.—S. W. DEWEY.

DAY-BREAK glimmered in gray light over the harbor and city of Charleston. The river-mist rose slowly from the surface of the water, and under a glowing sunrise, the fleet of Admiral Sir Peter Parker displayed its bunting, as it advanced to battle. It was an imposing spectacle; for nearly fifty vessels, comprising nine ships of the line and forty transports, ranged up the channel, with their canvas set to the soft breeze; and the first sunbeams, slanting on them, made all these sails appear like wings of fire.

Moultrie, on Sullivan's Island, foresaw that if the engagement should be protracted, his small store of ammunition must be exhausted before its termination. Like Putnam at Bunker Hill, he resolved that every shot should tell; and his feeble armament was therefore mounted in such a position that it commanded diagonally the advancing vessels, while the powder (scarcely five thousand pounds altogether) was distributed in due proportions to the guns, under the care of his own regimental officers.

The fort-defenders of the city could cast their eyes to the left, and see the housetops covering their own firesides, crowded with those dearer to them than life. They needed no more inspiring spectacle to nerve them for conflict.

The river-fogs disappeared, and a hot June sun began to shed its scorching rays. Moultrie moved up and down along the defenses, smoking his short pipe, and encouraging the soldiers. Marion, silent and thoughtful, moved about, exchanging glances with his old comrades of the Indian war—glances which meant volumes to those brave men.

"We have hot work, and a long day before us, Captain," observed Moultrie, to young Riviere, who was pointing an English eighteen-pounder at the hull of the enemy's flag-ship, but we must try to keep cool." Saying this, the Colonel emitted a great puff of smoke.

"The foe will find the work as hot, doubtless," answered Riviere, "and the day as long, if our powder holds out, sir."

"Our powder! it must be husbanded," said Moultrie. "I see, Captain, you understand the business, by the bearing of your gun. That's right, my young soldier! Look to the Commodore! look to

the two-deckers ! and we'll soon have them all between wind and water !”

“ Look to the Commodore ! look to the two-deckers ! ” ran in a murmur along the intrenchments, and the young officers of guns began to take ranges of the battle-ships. Moultrie smiled, and said : “ No fear of men like these ! ” Then turning to meet Major Marion, who approached, followed by Jasper, and another athletic figure :

“ Who is this ? ” he asked, sharply, apparently recognizing the last of the three.

“ A new volunteer, who finds small favor in the eyes of my brave Jasper, however.” So saying, the Major pointed to Matthew Blake, whose face had already been recalled by the commander as that of the man who had ridiculed the project of defending Sullivan's Island.

“ So it appears, sir, you have altered your mind as regards our log-ramparts,” said Moultrie, scanning the volunteer's features.

“ Whether I have or have not,” answered the bravo, carelessly, “ I am here to do my duty in defending them—that is, if you deem me good enough for a target, Colonel ! ”

“ We want men who can make targets of Britishers ! ” cried Sergeant Jasper.

“ I can point a piece as true as any man on the island,” rejoined Blake, scowling at the sergeant; and as he spoke, a gun from the Admiral's ship boomed heavily, and two frigates let go their anchors, and ranged abreast of the fortifications.

“ Answer that shot, if you can point a gun, sir,” said Moultrie to the man; “ 'tis the signal for battle.”

“ I beg, sir, you will let me point the gun—” began Captain Riviere; but the bravo had already swung the heavy carriage about with one hand, while with the other he seized a match, and stooping at the breech, sighted the piece with a rapid glance. Next moment smoke and flame belched from the cannon, and Matt Blake, with a dry laugh, cried :

“ Follow that, if you like ! ”

The smoke clearing, discovered the shot ricochetting over the waves which an easterly wind was blowing high. It struck the flagship *Bristol* fair in the hull, and scattered splinters in all directions from her planks.

A loud huzza rose from the American lines, and Moultrie puffed rapidly.

“ Well done,” he said, “ 'tis a good omen ! Now, men, to you stations all; and for you, sir,” he added, addressing Blake, “ if Captain Riviere likes you to assist in working his gun, remain with him.”

“ With all my heart,” said Riviere; “ I shall be glad of so brave a fellow.”

Blake's lip curled; but the battle had now begun in earnest, and he speedily found work to do. From the ports of six frigates in the channel a tremendous burst of flame issued incessantly. The fort

replied by volleys of small-arms and double-shotted cannon. Dense volumes of smoke wreathed over the water, and soared in white columns. The waves swelled, the beaches rocked under successive explosions. Heavy broadsides from the vessels occasionally lifted the clouds, permitting a momentary view of some swaying hull, which at once became a mark for Moultrie's guns.

About a mile below the immediate theater of conflict, Sir Henry Clinton attempted a landing of regular troops to attack Sullivan's Island by boats; but the scheme failed of completion; while, in taking their positions for a general attack, three frigates ran aground below the island, and lost all opportunity of testing their metal.

Meantime the sun rose toward noon; the heat of battle intensified by its scorching rays. The Americans, all grimed with powder, tore off their shirts, and fought wholly naked. The smoke-clouds rolled inland, and concealed the city; but the defenders knew that their friends were behind that dreadful curtain, listening to the din of the engagement.

Moultrie, calm amid the dizzy scene, smoked his pipe while inspecting his defenses, the bombs and balls falling unheeded about him. His courage became infectious; every man grew to be a hero at his gun. Marion's post was at an extremity of the fort, weakly defended by the hastily-constructed works. Surrounded by his rangers of the old wars, he pointed the guns, served out ammunition, and cheered the men to their duty. Sergeant Jasper, fighting near him, was so blackened and burned with sweat and powder as to be hardly distinguishable from the negro Cæsar, who was active under him, and who kept up a fire of dry remarks, and displayed his white teeth, as if there was not the remotest danger of their being knocked down his throat by a cannon-shot.

"Ki!" he yelled, as a rift in the smoke discovered the three British vessels fast among shoals, and with distress-signals flying. "Ki! Mauss' Jasper! we is pokin' fire into 'em!"

"Heah, you nigger! Look out for my jacket," cried a fine limbed young soldier, who was holding a match, as Marion sighted his gun. He pointed, in speaking, to a blue coat, the uniform of his regiment, which was sliding from a merlon, where he had carelessly thrown it.

"Me hab him, Mauss' McDaniel!" cried Cæsar, swinging himself about, and stretching out his hand to catch the garment; but ere he reached it, a cannon-ball came whizzing through the air with its strange, singing noise, and striking squarely under the collar of the coat, lifted it bodily from the merlon, and bore it over the head of the soldiers. Cæsar fell back, as if struck himself, his open mouth and dilated eyes expressing the most ludicrous alarm; but the coat sailed on, like a long swallow-tailed bird; while the soldiers along the whole western breastwork desisted with common consent from work, and broke out into one of the liveliest and merriest laughs that ever made the welkin ring. There, in the midst of deadly strife, with the

roaring of three hundred cannon around them, those gallant fellows laughed as freely as if on a piazza at Charleston.

"Cæsar! you black rascal! why didn't you stop that ball?" exclaimed the owner of the coat, shaking his fist in a humorous way at the negro.

"Ky!" cried the black, recovering by degrees from his consternation,—"*hi-yi!* what a shot dat was, for sartain! Might ha' kerried off dis yer chile, Mauss' McDaniel, jis' like de jacket! Oh, golly! look dah! look dah, mauss'—look at de coat, will ye?"

The soldier followed the negro's glance with his own, and beheld his coat lodged in the branches of a live-oak tree, in the rear of the fort.

"No harm's done," remarked he to Jasper, as he handed him his watch, and stooped to drink from a bucket beneath him. "The jacket has only changed pegs, you see. Howsomever, Cæsar, you look out for these thieving cannon-balls, or they may make love to it altogether!"

"Me look out for dat, Mauss' McDaniel"

"And be off now, you rascal, and get another supply of Jamaica," cried Jasper, kicking over the pail, which McDaniel's last draught had emptied.

"And say to the Colonel that we like it strong and sweet," quoth Marion, with a grim smile. "Poor fellows, they are in a furnace," he added, glancing at the gunners.

"And look you, Cæsar," said McDaniel, as the black passed him, "see that you fetch my coat from yon live-oak. It's a new one, and belongs to the State."

"Yes," cried the negro. "Dem cannon-balls is most too bad, dey is, massa; dey doesn't 'spect de State nor de sojers."

So saying, and burdened with his double commission, Cæsar started off for head-quarters, where Colonel Moultrie, pipe in mouth, was superintending the mixing of a huge tub of "grog," composed of Jamaica spirits and water, sweetened with sugar sap. The brave commander sat under the sweltering sun, endeavoring to "keep cool" under its heat, and patient under agonizing twinges of the gout, which had attacked him in the morning. Nobody could detect any expression save one of good-humor, save when some spasmodic pain forced an involuntary exclamation.

"Well, Cæsar, you're after more grog, are you? What were you shouting like mad for, a few moments since?"

"Golly Mauss' Kurnel, wish you'd a-seen it," chuckled the black, putting down the bucket. "Dat ar' Sergant McDaniel's sojer-coat, she got tak up by de skarts, an' off she fly, wid a cannon-ball in bofe pockets. Dah she is, Mauss' Moultrie, in yonder oak."

The commander joined with those around him in a hearty laugh at Cæsar's detail; and then, ordering his bucket to be replenished, proceeded in his pleasant way to overlook the manufacture of the fragrant beverage, at the same time giving kindly orders to the men

at his black-muzzled twenty-fours, who had sustained the heat of the action. Cæsar, burdened with his bucket of grog, set out on his return to Marion's post; but recollecting Sergeant McDaniel's orders to regain his coat, proceeded by a trifling detour to gain the oak-tree at the rear of the fort, which had arrested the marauding cannon-ball in the act of larceny. At this stage of the engagement, the firing on both sides was extremely severe—a cannonade being kept up by the two fifty-gun ships, which, with springs on their cables, rode opposite the fort, supported by four heavily mounted frigates, and the bomb-ketch *Thunderer*, with her blazing shells. A continuous shower of missiles fell into the swampy soil, and upon the myrtle and palmetto trees which grew on Sullivan's Island. Across the rear of the fort a strip of solid land led to the live-oak trees, on one of which McDaniel's coat was hanging, and thither Cæsar picked his way, carefully balancing his bucket of grog, and untterrified by the hail of balls on every side. As he went, he exchanged repartees with the soldiers who were breathing themselves at intervals away from the ramparts.

"Take care of the bomb-shells, smutty-face," cautioned a half-naked rifleman, who was cutting a palmetto-stick to replace a ram-rod which had been carried from his hand by a chain-shot.

"And take care of that grog, even though you kick the bucket," remarked another wild fellow, as he munched a quartern loaf.

"Hi-yi," returned Cæsar, "nebber you fear. Dis yer sojer-chile knows de bark of Johnny Bull-dog."

"Look out, Sambo; you'll get the headache," exclaimed another, as a heavy shell appeared in the air, curving through the smoke with a lurid light.

Cæsar glanced upward and beheld the terrible missile hovering just above him, and apparently ready to surge upon his skull.

"Ky," he yelled, springing to the right, and immediately sunk to his waist in the black mud of the swamp. The bomb-shell at the instant crashed down, burying itself in the moist ooze, within half a dozen feet of him.

"Dat fire is put out, sartain," spluttered Cæsar, struggling to regain his footing on *terra firma*, and holding his bucket at arm's length, so that he lost scarcely a gill of its contents.

"You've had a narrow escape, darkey," remarked the soldier who had been munching his bread. "Now, give me a mug of grog and I'll help you out again."

Cæsar returned to quarters without McDaniel's coat, but with a coat of black mud on his own sable body, which soon became baked like a crust under the sunbeams. Meantime the battle raged, and the exhausted cannoneers, after refreshing themselves with the spirits, ranged their guns upon the Admiral's ship, which had swung about, presenting her stern to the fort.

"Look to the Commodore," cried Marion.

The order was answered by flaming jets and an explosion that

shook the island. Then rose a shout from the fort's defenders, and then followed an unbroken silence for five minutes. It was during this interval that the last round of powder was served out on the Island, and a dispatch sent to Governor Rutledge for more. The British, listening for the fort's fire, and hearing it not, supposed they were about to surrender, and the fleet's crews began to cheer loudly, in anticipation of triumph. But they reckoned prematurely; for again came a rush of flame and crashing shot from the whole fortified line, dealing devastation through the ships. Their cheers were dashed, and they manned their guns again, answering with the united metal of five broadsides, earth and water rocking under the tremendous explosion. The battle-smokes were uplifted, and the sun's rays shone through them, as through a canopy of yellow gauze.

Marion pointed to the banner of the fort, which was waving in the breeze. Sergeant Jasper lifted his arms to it, and McDaniel, springing forward, raised his blue cap and cheered loudly; but at that moment another iron storm swept from the fleet. McDaniel's manly breast was before an embrasure, and as he waved his cap in honor of the flag of liberty, a cannon-shot stretched him dying before his comrades. Jasper was kneeling by his side in a second, and Marion grasped his hand. The poor fellow's nostrils were gushing blood. He strove to rise, but his strength failed, and he fell in the arms of his comrades.

"I die," he murmured, as they were bearing him away, his eyes shining with the last fires of patriotism. "I die, comrades, but you will fight on, for liberty and our country."

At this moment a low murmur ran through the line, and all eyes were turned, as if instinctively, toward the flag. It hung apparently by a splinter, trembling and ready to fall. A cannon-ball had shattered the staff, and the next instant it swayed and fell over the rampart, upon the low beach beyond them. The hearts of the defenders sunk, while an exulting shout arose once more from the enemy.

But Jasper saw the flag fall, and had already leaped upon the breastwork. His right hand was lifted, as if in appeal to heaven, and then, waving it to his countrymen, he plunged over the wall to the sands below. A crashing broadside from the fleet daunted him not. A furious shower of shells and balls, plowing the beaches, stayed not his course. He passed along the entire front of the batteries, to reach the fallen banner. Then, while four hundred hearts above him stood still in breathless suspense, he knelt and disengaged the flag from the shattered staff.

This brave man seemed to bear a charmed life, for not a shot struck him of the hundreds raining around. He called for a sponge-staff to be thrown from the ramparts, and there, kneeling on the beach, fastened upon it the rescued banner. Then, waving it over his head, Jasper mounted the wall, and planted once more over his applauding comrades the flag of their free America.

Clouded were the eyes that saw the flag fall, and heavy the souls that sunk with it. But such a mighty shout arose from Sullivan's Island when the bright folds flashed again in the sunlight, as never could be overpowered by the roar of artillery. That shout was the American hurrah. Working at the battery under his charge, Captain Riviere gallantly sustained his part in the battle; bearing himself more like a trained warrior than as one who had doffed his bridal garments for those of a soldier. His voice echoed cheerily the orders to "fire at the double-deckers," and "rake the flag-ship," and the brave men around him, who were nearly fainting under the sultry heat, caught his inspiring glance, and braced themselves anew for conflict.

Matt Blake, at one of the guns, watched his young officer with covert looks; until gradually, as the fight deepened, he seemed to become imbued with its spirit, and obeyed with alacrity the commands of his superior, even to a loud response, when the wild hurrah of cheers broke forth. The man lacked not bravery, and the bull-dog determination of the defense suited his stubborn nature; so that he whirled the gun-carriages about, as if they were no more than play-things, and exposed himself at the embrasures with a recklessness that appeared to mock at danger.

The thoughts of the two men—Riviere and Blake—were akin in sentiment at times; for the one recalled his gentle bride, while the memory of a cherished child tugged at the other's fierce heart.

Meantime, the combat raged on; the cannon-peals shaking earth and wave, the smoke-clouds enveloping ships and fort in a sulphurous fire. At intervals, as Captain Riviere looked toward Blake's gun, he met the bravo's eye, which suddenly fell; and at times, also, Blake felt under his flannel sleeve a small French pistol, which he had loaded to the muzzle. On such occasions the man would mutter: "He's a brave youth, but his life is not worth a thousand pounds to me! Not yet, though, not yet!" And then he would whirl his cannon, and send its contents tearing over the water.

Once, when a great broadside crashed from the British, Matt Blake felt himself suddenly grasped around the waist, and drawn violently from his gun. As he looked up savagely, to discover his assailant, he saw that it was Captain Riviere, and at the same instant he beheld a cannon-ball strike the piece, and shatter its trunnion. The quick eye of his young officer had marked the missile's approach, and his ready hand interposed to save the gunner's life. Blake's frame quivered through every fiber, and in his agitation the concealed pistol dropped and exploded at his feet.

"Take care, my man!" cried Riviere. "We can not spare you yet."

"He has saved my life," muttered the bravo, "and I have lost my thousand pounds."

Again the batteries roared, belching out their storms of iron. But Matt Blake shouted no more. He wheeled his gun, and applied the

match mechanically, maintaining a sullen silence throughout the changing fortunes of the fray. Those near him noticed that he drank oftener from the rum-bucket, though the liquor appeared to have little effect upon him; but none could know what a fierce struggle was going on in the bravo's mind; none could see how the blood shrunk within him when Ernest Riviere brushed him occasionally at the gun.

"Tush!" muttered the outlaw. "What recks this popinjay that he has saved my miserable carcass, but that I am one more for the work he is at. 'Twas a whim that diverted him; he would have kicked some dog aside to save the cur's skin doubtless. But," he added, with an oath, "I can't take the boy's life *here*—not here."

Thus soliloquized the bravo, as he doggedly served his gun. Balefully flashed the lurid glare of that broadside which swept away Sergeant McDaniel, crashing came that cannon-ball which severed the flagstaff. But Blake went on with his work unheedingly, till the powder gave out, and the fort fire slackened from lack of it. Then, while triumphant, cheers arose from the British, the outlaw only drank again and again, and leaned moodily against the parapet, till Marion and a dozen gallant men had run a gauntlet of broadsides, and brought back more ammunition from an armed sloop in the river.

Another even approached. The sun sunk behind the city. Twilight came and darkness, and then the stars climbed over the scene of strife. But the fire of the fort was kept up incessantly, till, as the hours passed, one after another of the British war-vessels drew off from her anchorage, and at length the signal-lanterns of retreat swung from the Admiral's peak. Moultrie took a long whiff of his pipe, and said:

"I think we have driven them at last."

"Yonder," said Marion, "are some disabled crafts that might be reached." He pointed, in speaking, to the three vessels grounded on the shoals, one of which, the *Acteon*, lay high upon the rocks. "With your leave, Colonel, I will take a few men, and reconnoiter them."

"God be with you, Major, go," returned Moultrie; and in a few moments the brave partisan had selected a small detachment, and was pulling, in a boat, for the stranded frigate, which had been already abandoned by her crew. Foremost among the volunteers was Captain Riviere, and, as he sprung, with Marion, on the *Acteon's* decks, he saw close behind him the countenance of the gunner whose life he had saved. At this moment, the British fleet was making all sail out of the channel.

"Let us give them a parting salute from their own guns," muttered the bravo. "I doubt they are still loaded."

"Well thought of," cried Major Marion; and the word being given, a last broadside from the *Acteon's* pieces crashed after her consort, scattering death and terror among their crews. The battle of Sullivan's Island was finished, and the British beaten. The cowed

and crippled lion slunk away before a log-fort, manned by four hundred militia men.

"Now to the boats!" commanded Major Marion. "This ship is ~~afire~~ and may blow up in a moment."

The Americans lost no time in obeying this order, but crowded over the bulwarks to their boats; for the water, no longer illumined by flashes of artillery, had become dark around the doomed frigate. It was at this moment, when Captain Riviere was awaiting till the last man had safely descended, that he felt himself struck suddenly from behind, and, toppling forward, felt some one rushing by. Instinctively he grappled the object, but too late to regain his footing. He fell heavily over the *Acteon's* quarters, dragging with him a heavy body, which he clutched with a desperate grasp. A dull plunge and smothered cry, and Riviere and the object he held sunk in the deep waters.

"Away! push off! The fire is near the magazine! We'll all be blown up!" were the confused shouts that rose from the boat.

"Pull away," they cried, "or we are lost!"

The boat shot out into the stream, away from the *Acteon's* dark shadow. Suddenly, along her decks, and up her rigging, forked flames darted, while a fierce light flashed from stem to stern. Then she blew up, her scattered fragments falling in showers on land and river.

The boat containing Marion and his men was rowed slowly back to the fort; but a gloom hung over all its crew. Captain Riviere, the brave volunteer Captain, came not back from the doomed *Acteon*. Neither he nor the dark gunner returned to Charleston, when the joy-bells of triumph rung out, to welcome the defenders of Sullivan's Island.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DUMMY.

A weed flung by;

A withered floweret, plucked to die.—ANON.

ON the bank of a small river, near the borders of South Carolina and Georgia, stood, in 1778, an old house, which, during the Indian wars preceding the Revolution, had been a sort of stronghold against marauding Cherokees. Its buttressed walls and loop-hole windows had defended the interior from more than one savage attack in the past, and gave promise of good service in the future. A growth of woods along the river, and behind the plantation appurtenant to

this dwelling, formed a natural bulwark; inclosing out-houses occupied by the servants of the castle; and a wide avenue of oaks led from the front door to a highway about a quarter of a mile distant.

The river-banks were grown with thickets and dense underbrush on all sides, which afforded cover for game close to the house and its detached huts. It offered cover, too, on a sultry evening, in the autumn of 1778, for a troop of some two-score partisans, whose horses were picketed under the trees. They were a rough company, clad in buckskin and fustian, and armed with a variety of weapons; and the lack of discipline among them showed that they belonged to the irregular soldiery who, at this period, waged bitter strife on the marshes of Carolina.

The members of this motley band were scattered in all directions; some ranging among the negro-quarters, bantering the wenches, others seated or lying on the sward, and others drinking and smoking in groups. In front of one of the huts sat a swart-browed man, whose slouched felt hat nearly hid his features, and whose heavy frame was encased in a garb half nautical and half military, consisting of a sailor's pea-coat, with anchor buttons, and yellow soldier's breeches, much the dirtier for long wear. A pair of dragoon's pistols, and a formidable hunting-knife in his belt, gave a fierce look to this personage, which seemed to impress with great reverence a negro who stood near.

"Squire Atnee's plantation! umph!" quoth the trooper, emitting a puff of tobacco-smoke from his bearded mouth. "You lazy dogs have a good master, I hear."

"Dar's no fa'ut to find wi' mauss'," answered the negro. "Mauss' nebber work nigga mon'trous hard."

"Not a big family, to have much work to do up there, I fancy," said the partisan, jerking his head in the direction of the dwelling house, whose chimneys could be discerned over the thick grove surrounding it.

"Ky!" exclaimed the black. "Reckin Mauss' Bob's family is Mauss' Bob hisself. Dar' ain't no heap o' white folks 'round dier place."

"Eh, Snowball? Does your master live alone?"

"Mauss' Bob live anywhar' he please, sah," answered the negro. "Har' to-day, yar to-morrow—dat's Mauss' Bob. Ole Gattan take keer ob de house, and dar's a couple o' ole darkies to cl'ar 'way de enores. We is field niggars, down yer, we is."

"But where's your master's wife?"

"Ky! Mauss' Bob he got no wife."

"But he's got a child, Snowball. I've heard tell he had a litt' daughter, deaf and dumb. Didn't he bring her from Charleston, eh?"

The partisan in asking this question, removed his pipe from his mouth, and regarded the negro with a sharp look. But the black suddenly broke into a loud laugh.

"Ky!" he exclaimed. "Is dat yar dummy Mauss' Bob's dar-ter? Spec's mauss' keer a heap for his own flesh and blood den."

"Then the child is here!" cried the partisan, grasping the negro's arms, and speaking in a husky voice.

"De dummy, sah?"

"Yes, Snowball, what about the dummy?"

"A'most done, mauss' ranger," replied the negro, shaking his head. "Dar's no chance for poor dummy, Aunty Phyllis says."

"Black scoundrel! what do you mean? Where's the child—the child, I say?" rejoined the trooper, in savage, though suppressed tones. "What do you mean by saying there's no chance for her?"

"'Kase Aunty Phyllis says dat dummy's sartin to die 'fore sun-lown. Lor' bress us, is mauss' ranger got de shakes?"

The negro stared at the partisan, who appeared to be shivering, as if suddenly seized by an ague-fit, and whose white lips mumbled some sounds which were slowly shaped into words.

"Want to see de dummy, sah? Bress de Lor', she's over yonder, at Aunty Phyllis' cabin in de swamp," answered the black. "Fol-ler along, mauss' ranger, I's jest gwine dar."

The white man motioned with his hand, and the negro preceded him, across a corner of the clearing, and down a narrow pathway through the thick woodland, till they reached some marshy ground bordering the river. Here stood a weather-beaten hovel, surrounded by the customary small garden-path. A negress, whose age might have been a century, so shriveled and decrepit she seemed, sat at the open hut door; and to this crone the field-negro addressed an inquiry concerning "the dummy." But before she could respond, the partisan had pushed roughly over her threshold, and at the same moment uttered a loud cry.

"What de debble dat?" cried the negro, running past Aunt Phyllis, to follow the white intruder, and to discover him kneeling on the clay floor of the hut, his hands clenched in his shaggy hair, his teeth set, and his eyes fixed in a glassy stare upon some object before him. The negro did not require to be told that this object was "the dummy."

A female child, about eight years old, lay on a mattress of coarse hemp, half covered with dirty cotton cloth. Her face, delicately fair, was pinched as from long sickness, and her neck and arms were worn to mere bone and transparent skin. The impress of suffering appeared stamped on every lineament save only the eyes, which were large and brilliant, and full at this moment of joyful recognition. Her thin fingers were locked together, and lifted toward the white man kneeling beside her pallet. Her lips emitted a strange guttural sound.

"Bress de Lord," ejaculated the field negro, pausing in astonishment, as he encountered this scene, and immediately afterward beheld the partisan throw himself forward, to clasp the young girl in his arms, and lift her tenderly to his breast, kissing her repeatedly,

while heavy tears dropped from his eyes upon her pale cheeks. Turning to the crone who had hobbled forward on her stick, the slave whispered in a low voice :

“Aunty Phyllis—maybe’s de angel ob def come to car’ poor dummy off.”

The old woman took no notice of her fellow-African’s remark, but waited quietly a few moments while the white man continued to embrace the child, and the child uttered its low brooding, like the cooing of a dove. Presently, however, her eye caught the little one’s, and, hobbling forward, she laid her hand upon the stranger’s arm.

“Dat chile’s out o’ breff, massa sojer,” said she softly. “Please let de darlin’ talk to Aunty Phyllis. Dummy knows Aunty Phyllis.”

The sick child lifted her weak clasp from the rough man’s bearded throat, and began to make feeble motions with her small fingers. Aunty Phyllis dropped her cane, and raising both of her shriveled hands, replied by similar signs. Thus, during several moments, a pantomime went on between the two—the negress nodding and shaking her withered head, the child languidly shaping speech upon her fingers, in the rude language of the deaf and dumb.

Thus Aunty Phyllis learned that the mute waif of her cabin was the daughter of that fierce man who held her in his arms, and in return, she related to the partisan how the child had been brought to the plantation two years before, by her master’s nurse, Gattan, and had been thrown into the charge of Aunt Phyllis, as a helpless “dummy,” to perish or survive as nature might determine; how she had taught the little one rude signs, and learned to interpret its wants; but how month by month, it had pined and grieved as if for something lost, till it dwindled to a shadow, “refused its food, forgot its play,” and sunk so low that death’s door now seemed open for its passage to a world where suffering is no more.

The rough, dark man, the wondering field-negro, the withered old woman leaning on her stick, and the beautiful mute, pallid and ghost-like, were strange contrasts, in that hut, when the sunset beams slanted through surrounding tree-tops, robing them with warm light. Matthew Blake, bravo, pirate, murderer, kissed his dying child again, and laid her to sleep on the coarse pallet—kissed her tenderly, parting the damp curls on her forehead; then, charging negress Phyllis and her fellow-black, that they should speak no word of his visit to any mortal, and giving to each a broad piece of silver, to insure their silence, he went out to the camp of his comrades again, with a new purpose in his stormy soul.

CHAPTER IX.

LAURELWOOD HOUSE.

Embowered in woods,
Deep in a sylvan vale.—THE FRIENDS,

IN what manner Matthew Blake escaped from a watery grave when the frigate *Acteon* blew up in Charleston harbor, will be explained at the proper time. Let it now suffice, that he found himself a trooper in a Tory band, after having served nearly twenty months as a sailor, on board the British fleet in American waters.

Meanwhile his employer, Robert Atnee, had pursued his career in other quarters. The repulse of Admiral Parker, an event which filled every patriot heart with joy, was to the Tory a bitter mortification, and the more so, that it was speedily followed by an accusation against himself, founded on alleged complicity with the enemy. He did not wait to confront the charge, but departing from Charleston with all possible alacrity, retired to his plantation on the borders of Georgia, there to watch more safely the progress of events.

Meantime, when joy-bells, and Moultrie's brave soldiers marched proudly through Charleston's streets, the multitude greeting them with cheers and shouts, there was one household, at least, which could not mingle in the general jubilee. The little band of volunteers, on whose roll the name of Ernest Riviere was inscribed, bore a shrouded flag in their midst; and when it passed the house of old John Riviere, there was silence, and the slow step of a funeral march, to tell of one who came not with his comrades.

What would have been the horror of those brave men had they suspected the foul treachery which had deprived them of a friend and brother; or divined that one who had plotted the murder of Ernest Riviere was one of his own kin and country? Neither the arch-conspirator or his instrument could be arraigned, and the name of the missing patriot, like that of the fugitive, soon ceased to be spoken in Charleston.

Robert Atnee, though forced to forego the advantage which British success might have insured to him, yet exulted in the certainty that both Riviere and Matt Blake had perished by the sudden explosion of the *Acteon*, on whose decks the two had been last seen together. Henceforth he deemed himself secure from the discovery of certain dark transactions, whereof Blake was the confidant, and feeling no further interest in the bravo's unfortunate child, which he had taken with him to Laurelwood, he soon abandoned its helplessness to the

tender mercies of a negro household. The interposition of Aunt Phyllis alone secured her poor "dummy" from entire neglect, and so it happened, as we have seen, that the bravo's innocent offspring survived to receive once more the embraces of her outlawed father.

Matthew Blake needed not the recital of Aunt Phyllis to divine at once what might have been the fate of his child, abandoned by Atnee as a dumb plaything for his slaves. Since that fatal night before the battle, when Alice was torn from her couch, the bravo had lived only on the hope of regaining his lost darling. Through long watches at sea, her pale face was always before him, and after many fruitless attempts he had made his escape from the fleet, and joined a band of marauding Tories, for the single purpose of searching out the treacherous Atnee, in whose charge he believed his little one to be. After tracking the abductor during four months, he at length discovered his treasure, and we shall now follow him to the house of Robert Atnee, who, at the same hour, was preparing plots with new confederates.

The sun had disappeared, and the woods were in twilight, when Matthew Blake left the hovel of Aunty Phyllis, and proceeded to one of the huts before which he had picketed his horse. Entering this, he remained a few moments, and then emerged, having exchanged his pea-coat for a wagoner's frock, and left both pistols and saber with his horse's rude equipments in the hut.

The bravo's appearance was much changed by the alteration of his dress, and the evening shadows, now closing in, enabled him to glide, without being observed, from the boisterous neighborhood of the Tory camp, and reach a high hedge of shrubbery which surrounded the mansion-house. Here, skulking under the balcony foliage, and favored by the dusk, he could peer into the open casements, and observe all who entered the dwelling.

When lights began to appear, the bravo saw the old negress Gattan, and her grandchild, Filippa, passing and repassing within, arranging a table in one of the rooms overhanging the balcony. He resolved if possible to gain this room and hide himself in one of the recesses, of which there were many, on all sides. Climbing the trellis, and crouching under its vines he soon projected a mode of concealment.

The windows of the supper-room were hung with velvet and thin muslin, depending in folds to the floor. The curtains, at first view, appeared to offer a safe cover, but Matt Blake reflected that the evening air might render it desirable that they should be drawn close, in which case, concealment would be impracticable. He decided, therefore, on another retreat. The wide fireplace was filled with summer plants, in square wooden boxes, covering its capacious hearth. The branches of these house-flowers spread upward, over the mantle, forming a parlor-conservatory, admirably adapted for screening any one behind; and it was to Blake but a moment's work to ensconce himself in the chimney recess, without disturbing the appear-

ance of a single leaf. Thus, curtained by flowers and foliage, he could observe whatever transpired in the supper room.

For some moments after the bravo had taken his position, the apartment remained silent and tenantless, though brilliantly illuminated by the lights of a candelabra on the table. Then the clatter of horses' hoofs without, and presently the sound of voices, announced to Blake that some one was approaching. His heart beat quickly, in recognizing Robert Atnee as one of two persons, who, booted and spurred, now clattered into the apartment.

The Tory was clad in a brown riding-suit, and armed with sword and pistols, which he presently threw upon a side board. His companion was recognised by Blake as the Captain of the troop of Tory partisans, of which he himself was a member, and which was quartered at this hour on the plantation. Imitating his host, this man unbuckled a heavy sword, and laid it across one of the old-fashioned arm-chairs drawn up near the table.

"Captain Richard Yancey, sit and eat," cried Atnee, in a gay tone. "If our ride has sharpened your appetite as it has mine, we shall do old Gattan's frugal fare some honor."

"Gad, Atnee, I'm wolfish, I promise ye," responded the partisan Captain, whose square jaws, yellow eyes and sensual lips denoted a temperament not averse to animal comforts, and who, without ceremony, threw himself into an arm-chair and drew it up to the table. Gattan, the housekeeper, here made her appearance, followed by a brace of elderly negresses with smoking dishes, and the two companions were soon engaged in discussing what was liberally set before them.

"Gad, Atnee, you've a paradise of a place here. What a deuced comfortable thing to be rich, eh? Here am I chasing round after rebels, from Dan to Beersheba, with no pay, and only a chance of plunder now and then."

"Pay and plunder will come in good time, Captain. Let the king get Charleston again, and you'll come in for your share, never fear. His majesty's forces will soon overrun Georgia."

"There's that ranger Marion and his ragged devils, stirring up trouble again. Zounds, Atnee, 'twill take a bigger army than Prevost's to keep the cursed bottoms from sprouting rebels as they do cotton-pods. There's only one way to get on with 'em, Atnee. Hang all and quarter nobody. But at present that's inconvenient, you know."

"I trust our unhappy South Carolina will soon return to her allegiance to good King George, Captain Yancey," said Atnee. "Let us drink his majesty's health, and confusion to the Yankee Lincoln and his northern ragamuffins."

"'Tis true, then, that Lincoln is coming here. But he'll not catch Prevost asleep like Burgoyne, eh?"

"I fancy not," rejoined Atnee, with a laugh. "We'll hang him and his Yankees as long as the Carolinas grow trees for the purpose."

"That'll be comfortable—Gad, it will, Atnee," cried the Tory Captain, clinking his wine-glass. "But, dang it, man," he continued, lowering his voice, "and send away those nigger hogs, and let's have the yaller lady up."

"First talk of *my* business, Captain," said the host, with a slight sneer, as he motioned Gattan and the other sable attendants to leave the room. Meantime, the concealed bravo held his breath to listen.

"All right, Atnee, business first, pleasure afterward," quoth the trooper, pouring out his wine. "We understand matters, you know. I'm yours, till death us do part, as the parson says, you know."

"You told me that old John Riviere and his daughter had already set out from Charleston, and are now on the road to Beaufort."

"That's it, Atnee—slow coaches, change of air for the young lady—doctor's prescription, sea-shore, you know."

"And you are sure they can be intercepted, Captain?"

"Before forty-eight hours pass, they'll strike the Hill Fork, and there I'll bag them, like partridges, sir—provided we agree on terms, you know," answered the trooper, replenishing his glass, and filling that of his host; after which he held the decanter up to the light, pretending to scrutinize it. "Gad, that's good stuff of yours, Atnee," he continued. "Let's drink to my brown beauty, Fillippa."

Atnee drank carelessly, eyeing the trooper's inflamed countenance. "Yancey," he said, abruptly, and in a measured voice, "you shall have the girl, but by Jove, you must treat her well."

"Oh, never you mind, Bob Atnee, when there's a woman concerned," returned the partisan, with a leer. "I'm tender as a lamb, Atnee. What's that the poet says? 'Lion in war, lamb in peace,' eh, you know."

"This girl has been raised a lady, Yancey. She's proud and high-strung, and more than that, I promised never to sell her."

"Promised who?"

"Old Gattan, her grandmother, who saved my life once."

"That high-stepping old jade, eh? Oh, bother your promise. You want Riviere's widow, and I must have your brown chattel. Say the word, and the bargain's made—wench for wench."

"Filippa shall be yours, Yancey; but Gattan must not know that I consent to it. To morrow, when I accompany you, the girl shall go with us on horseback, under the pretext that her attendance is required for the lady. If you find means to carry her off while I secure *my* prize, of course I can not prevent it. Do you comprehend the romance, Yancey?"

"Perfectly," rejoined the Captain. "Give me you, Atnee, for plotting, at any time. And now, have her up here, for a bit, eh, Atnee?"

The host pulled a bell-cord, and summoned the quadroon girl, who came, in company with Gattan. Filippa approached the table, but her eyes fell on encountering the trooper's bold gaze.

"The gentleman is a soldier of the king, and our good friend, Filippa," said her master. "He desires you to take a glass of wine with him."

"Filippa is not well to-night," interposed the old negress, observing that her granddaughter shrunk from the table.

"Nay, 'tis to *my* health, Gattan," responded Atnee, with a covert glance at his young slave. The poor girl started, and held out her hand for the glass which Atnee filled for her. Captain Yancey filled his own, never ceasing to regard her with admiring stare.

"Now, my brown beauty, hip—to your master's health, and may you love him to distraction."

Filippa had lifted the glass to her lips, but the trooper's words caused her to tremble so violently, that the wine was spilled plentifully.

"Here, touch *my* glass with your cherry lips, my brown beauty," cried the Captain, rising unsteadily, for the fumes of intoxication were mounting to his thick brain. But Robert Atnee laid his hand upon him.

"I fear the girl is not well. Gattan, let Filippa retire with you—the Captain will excuse her to-night."

He squeezed the trooper's arm, pressing him back to his chair, while the negress hastened with her grandchild from the apartment.

"Deuced shame. Gad, Atnee, what right have you?—Brown beauty's my property, you know."

"Not yet," said the Tory, significantly. "Come, my brave Captain, we have work to-morrow. Let us drink our nightcaps."

Atnee filled again as he spoke, and drank with the Captain, who was fast becoming bewildered, and who ludicrously accepted the attentions of an attendant, summoned to conduct him to his chamber. The Tory bade good-night to his guest, and was once more, as he thought, *alone*.

"This besotted marauder," he muttered, "should never have the girl, if he were not, as he is, so necessary. But Louise Riviere must be mine, or her death secure me the reversion of my uncle's property. For such a stake, what is a slave-girl to me? I doubt she loves me, in her wild way, and I must stipulate that this brute Yancey shall treat her well. But Louise and old Riviere, they must not escape me." Robert Atnee filled another glass of wine. "To-morrow night," he resumed, "to-morrow night, I shall turn the tables on them." He began to drink slowly; and at this moment, the bravo, Matthew Blake, putting aside the flowers that concealed him, emerged from the fireplace, and stood at the back of his foe. Robert Atnee sipped his wine, but ere the glass was drained, an iron grasp was on his throat, and a dagger gleamed before his startled eyes.

"Ha! ha! Master Atnee," laughed Matthew Blake.

The tone of that remembered name caused Atnee's blood to congeal, as, struggling to escape, he gasped for breath, essaying to cry out, but in vain. His enemy's fingers were like a vice.

"I have come for my child, d'ye hear, Robert Atnee?—for my Alice, whom you stole from her bed. I swore, when we parted, that my revenge would follow you, if you paltered with me. Robber! I know that my child is here; and you—you shall die!"

Atnee struggled, but uselessly. The strong-armed man lifted him from the chair, bending back his head, and poised the weapon that he held for a fatal blow. But, ere it could fall, a white figure glided silently over the carpet, and interposed under the impending arm. Matthew Blake saw no face—it was hidden upon the Tory's bosom; but the white robe, the woman's form, unnerved him for an instant, and in the next, he felt the sharp chill of steel thrill through his side. The woman had stabbed him, uttering a loud shriek.

Matt Blake heard the sound of coming feet, felt the blood trickling from his wound, and staggered back, his dagger falling to the floor. Then, turning with a superstitious dread, and rushing to the window, he flung himself over the balcony. His brain was dizzy, and as he fled through the dark avenue, he drew from his side, where it had been struck, a long, thin stiletto.

Meantime the Tory lay insensible on his arm-chair, where he had sunk, half strangled, when Blake released his hold. Overcome with pain and terror, he knew not that he was saved.

But as he lay, with closed eyes and discolored features, under the glare of the candelabra, Filippa, the quadroon, bent over him, pressing her lips to his pallid forehead, while her brow, cheeks and neck, were crimson with burning blood.

Again had Filippa preserved her master's life. And now, as the regress Gattan entered, the quadroon pressed her finger on her lips and glided away as she came, like a spirit.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHILD'S GRAVE.

I will not pause—I will not tire,
Till vengeance slake my righteous ire.—TAYLOR.

MORNING broke over Laurelwood House, and the smiling landscape that encompassed it. The air grew fragrant with the scents of flowers, the skies golden with sunshine, and every thing in nature seemed blessed and beautiful.

But to Robert Atnee, hastening to consummate his villanies, and

to the wretched Matthew Blake, balked of his revenge, the morning might as well have been barren of both perfume and brightness. The Tory and his partisan confederate, Yancey, were early on the road, and had left the plantation far behind them, ere the sun was two hours high. But it was near the noon tide before the negress, Aunt Phyllis, seated at her hut door, beheld a staggering form emerge from the swamp wood, into the clearing, and reel toward her, with extended hands, in one of which was clutched a bloody weapon. She tottered to her feet, and essayed to cry aloud for help, but fright paralyzed her tongue, and she could only sink back again, crouching beside her threshold.

Little had she to fear, however, from the wretched being, who, with unsteady motion and wandering eyes, approached and sunk on the sward before her hovel. It was Matthew Blake, but how changed from the fierce trooper who had found his child under her roof the evening previous. The man's large frame was now weak as a child from loss of blood, and his mind was equally enfeebled by the effects of delirium. During more than a dozen hours, since his abortive attack upon Atnee, the bravo had lain through darkness and light at the foot of a cypress-tree in the swamp, where he had fallen exhausted, after his flight from the mansion. The stiletto, with which Filippa stabbed him, had pierced deeply, though not vitally, and occasioned a slow bleeding, coupled with fever. No human eye had watched, no human hand soothed the paroxysm which had afflicted the wretched man during all his hours of agony. Alone he had wrestled with pain, till the loss of blood reduced his fever, and left him barely strength to gain the hut of Aunt Phyllis, with one thought absorbing his miserable heart, and informing his misty intelligence—the thought of his dumb child, Alice.

Alice! Her name had ever softened Blake's indurated nature, and illumined his dark soul with glimmerings of humanity and love. It recalled his scattered senses, and drew his staggering steps to the crone's hovel, and he breathed it as he sunk before the door-sill. Aunt Phyllis quickly saw the man's condition, and conceiving that he must have been wounded in some recent *melee*, hastened to render her assistance. She staunched and bound his still bleeding wound, and hobbling into the hut, returned with a cup of rum and sugared water, which she forced between his compressed lips. In a few moments he revived, and with returning consciousness, asked concerning his child. Aunt Phyllis shook her head, and the wretched father struggled with difficulty to his feet, and entered the hut with her.

The dumb girl lay upon her pallet, near the single window, shaded with thick vines, through which the sunshine could not glare; but the day was a sultry one, and the child seemed to be laboring for air, her breath coming quick and short. Her eyes were closed, her face pallid as marble, and damp with heavy perspiration. Matthew Blake threw himself beside the bed, and, with a wild look, gazed

upon his dying child, for she was indeed passing away. Another form at this moment darkened the narrow doorway; it was that of the field negro, who had, the night before, conducted the trooper to the hovel.

"Is ye heerd about Mauss'—" the black was beginning a sentence, when he caught sight of the bravo, cowering over his child, and at once became mute, and crept softly toward the crone, whose shriveled form was doubled upon her staff. Aunt Phyllis shook her head significantly, and the two remained silent, regarding the father and his child.

The Southern sun rode high, and its beams fell vertically upon the low swamp dwelling. Matthew Blake's fever was gone, but more than physical torture racked his wretched soul. He groveled on the clay floor of the hut, sobbing aloud, and writhing till the blood streamed again from his wounded side. Then he would become less violent, and bow over his child, wringing his hands, and laying his bearded face beside her white cheek. But at last, as all mortal things end, so ended the dumb one's suffering existence. Her eyes sought those of her father, with a parting look of love, her blue lips feebly moved for a last kiss, and Matt Blake's darling was freed from pain forever.

Neither Aunty Phyllis nor her fellow-slave cared to disturb the deathlike swoon into which the trooper sunk after his last embrace of the child. He lay stretched upon the ground, cold and pale, with jaws rigidly set, and only a stertorous breathing, at intervals, denoting that he lived. The two blacks busied themselves in preparing the body for burial, a task that required indeed but little labor; and it was not till the frail remains of beauty had been swathed and laid out, on a new cotton cloth, that the rough father again awoke to a realization of his loss. When he did, it was to exhibit no more violence of grief; but he eagerly grasped the cup of rum which was proffered to him, and drained its contents at a gulp. Thus stimulated, he looked, with dry eyes and a scowling brow, on the shiny face of his dead, and moodily replied to Aunt Phyllis' questions concerning her burial. Meantime the field hands had carried the news of "dummy's death" to the negro-quarters, and a crowd of blacks soon appeared at the hut-door, eager to look upon the white child's face ere it should be covered away forever.

Matt Blake, sitting at the bedside in gloomy apathy, regarded not the intruders, nor listened to their low whispers. He only nodded when Aunty Phyllis spoke to him, and watched vacantly what she did. And when, at sunset, the negro brought in a rude pine coffin, and when, at a later hour, a somber procession went out, under the moonlight, and with torches, and traversed the dark swamp-forest, bearing the dead child, Matthew Blake walked, like one in his sleep, with head bowed, to the plantation burial place, and saw, without a word, the clay cast upon all he had loved during years of his dark life.

But when, after the burial, the pitying blacks would have led him away, he shook them off, and threw himself prostrate upon the new grave. "Leave me!" he cried, hoarsely, to Aunt Phyllis. "Go your ways, and let me be alone!"

The negress departed, and Matt Blake remained upon the fresh earth that covered the dust of Alice. The burial-place was at the end of the swamp, where the ground sloped from a ridge to the river near a fording-place. Tall trunks of palmettoes were scattered here and there, and there was a grave upon the highest part of the land, within which were several white tomb-stones, marking the resting-place of white masters, while the undistinguished graves of bondmen occupied the swamp-land below. The dumb child had been laid on the exposed hillock-side, and upon it, and on Blake's form, the bright moonlight fell gloriously. But he, wretched man, recked not of heaven or earth, as he tore his hair, and gnashed his teeth, calling upon the name of his lost one. Still prone on the clay he kept his vigils, and so was found by the field negro and another black, who returned, after some hours, with food and a flask of rum, sent by the compassionate Phyllis.

"Mauss' ranger mus' eat a bit," said the slave. "Dis yer bacon and sweet 'tater is mighty good, mauss', and dar's a drop o' suthin' that's raal. Drink it, mauss'—it'll do ye good."

Blake seized the flask, and applied it to his lips, and ravenously devoured the viands.

"I is takin' keer o' mauss's pony," continued the black. "Poor critter might ha' don starved to def—"

"My horse!" cried the trooper, "ah! where is he—and the band?"

"Done gone, mauss'—all rode clean away, 'long wi' Mauss' Robert and de Cap'n."

Blake pressed his hands to his forehead, and appeared to ponder a moment; then, with fierce abruptness, he cried:

"Bring me the mare—I must be off from this."

"Is you strong enough to ride, mauss' ranger?"

"Bring me the mare," repeated Blake, "and rum—do you hear?—another flask of the spirits. There's money for you."

He thrust his hand under his wagoner's frock, and, drawing out a pouch, took from it a couple of silver dollars, and handed them to the black. Then, turning his head, he threw himself back upon the grave. The blacks withdrew, terrified at his strange demeanor.

A sudden image had entered into the man's breast, with the mention by the negro of his horse. The form of Robert Atnee, riding, as he had overheard him plot, to waylay the merchant Riviere and his niece, presented itself vividly to his heated fancy, and he resolved, at the moment, to pursue and carry out his purpose of revenge upon his enemy. Once in possession of his brain, this desperate project overmastered all other impulses. No sooner had the negro disappeared than he arose to his feet, and began to examine the bandages which

confined his wounded side. His repeated draughts of spirits had lent artificial vigor to his iron frame.

While thus occupied, the trooper heard a sound in the distance, which his quick ear recognized as the clatter of horses' hoofs, and in a few moments he beheld a dozen riders approaching by the river-road, which diverged, near the swamp cemetery, at a fording-place. From his position, on the hill-side, Blake could see them descending to the shallow water, and cast their bridles loose, to permit the horses to drink. The moonlight irradiated all objects, and threw the figures of men and steeds into strong relief; and he saw that they were not his own comrades of Yancey's troop, though clad much like them, in the rough garments of hunters and woodsmen. "They must be rebel scouts," muttered the partisan. "I heard they were out on the borders. What care I for rebels or king's men? My enemy is Atnee."

As the man said this to himself, he heard the noise of hoofs on the woodland sward, and immediately afterward the negro appeared, riding from the swamp-wood, out into the moonlight among the graves. He recognized his own mare, and at the same instant became aware that the sound of her feet had reached the horsemen at the pond; for there was an instantaneous movement of the whole into line upon the river-bank. Matthew Blake at once decided on his course; and no sooner did the negro dismount at his side, than he leaned upon him and clambered to the saddle. Then, bidding the black an abrupt "good-night," he galloped down the hillock toward the pond, and was soon in front of the strange horsemen.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" was the salutation which Blake received, as he pulled up his mare, and lifted his haggard eyes to him who appeared to be the leader of the troop. The bravo started, both at the voice and countenance which confronted him.

"Ha!" he muttered, involuntarily, "'tis the ranger Jasper."

"And I know your face," quickly responded the other. "It is pale now, but I have seen it grimed with powder-smoke. You were at Sullivan's Island—a gunner."

"I was a volunteer gunner in that log fort affair," rejoined Blake, "and paid dear enough for it afterward. But 'tis a long story, sir, and will do for the morrow. At present, if it be agreeable, I'm a volunteer at *your* service." Blake said this in an off-hand way, at the same time narrowly observing the ranger, whose reminiscences of Sullivan's Island he cared not to recall too vividly.

"If you be a true man," replied the bluff Sergeant, "I will talk of that matter as we push on. If you be spy or traitor, God help you."

So saying, Jasper turned his horse's head to the ford, and the troop rode forward, under a full moon that silvered all things with its light. Matt Blake turned in his saddle on gaining the opposite bank, and cast a parting look on the hillside where he had hidden

away the treasure of his dark life. Then, dashing his hand across his brow, he muttered a curse, coupled with the name of Robert Atnee, and spurred on at the side of his new leader.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FOREST AMBUSH.

With foot to foot, and steel to steel,
They met and waged their frequent war,
Till all the green turf ran with gore.—MARMOR

MANY hours after the meeting of Matt Blake with Jasper, the ranger, these two new allies might have been discovered, had they not studiously sought concealment, halting, rein to rein, in a thick, woody covert, curtained from the highway by a pendent growth of foliage. Their steeds were drawn up immovable in a wide fissure of the bank, above which hung the branches of a gnarled sycamore, overrun with parasitic vines that completely veiled the figures of horses and riders. Behind, in the forest-recesses, were the remainder of Jasper's small troop, alike motionless in the green shadows.

From the elevated position which they had secured, our hidder horseman could command the highway, on either side, and trace its sinuous course in ascents and descents, at intervals for several miles, though it was lost, here and there, in long stretches of woodland.

"Our short course across the country, and the speed of our ride, ought to have gained us a good day's march, comrade," said Jasper to his dark-browed associate. "Yet, here are we, at the Hill Fork, with no signs of your marauders as yet. How is that, comrade?" And the Sergeant's sharp eye flashed on Matt Blake, as if it would penetrate his thoughts. But the outlaw scarcely lifted his own glance, as he replied, moodily :

"We are here, at the Hill Fork, sure enough; and we have gained, if you say, a day's march. Well, let us bide here."

"Very good; but I neither see nor hear aught, to right or left—"

"My eyes are older than yours, Sergeant; nevertheless, I can tell two clouds of dust from two clouds in the heavens." Saying this, Blake jerked his hand to the right and left, and Jasper exclaimed at once :

"You're right, comrade, and I ask your pardon for what I said just now. There are clouds of dust rising over yon valley, and to the left of the forest yonder."

"Ay, whoever they be that make them, we shall find all face to

face not far from this ambush of ours," rejoined the bravo. "The valley just below us here will ring with hoofs ere an hour go by."

"You are right; they must meet in yon hollow," returned Jasper, "and a notable angle for sortie is this Hill Fork, comrade."

The two watchers became silent, each intent on following the movements of those wreaths of white dust which were at first hardly discernible in the distance, but presently grew more palpable, as they approached one another. Sergeant Jasper, to whom Matt Blake had communicated all that he had learned, regarding the contemplated foray of Captain Yancey, now perceived that the celerity with which his own men had traversed the defiles they had taken since daybreak must have placed them in advance of the Tory troopers, who had skirted the hills in a route of double the length. He was thus gratified in finding himself enabled to take post between the king's men and their anticipated victims; a situation which promised the bold partisan an opportunity of interposing at the right moment, and perhaps defeating the nefarious schemes in progress.

It was not long before the approaching cavalcades could be distinguished fairly, as they crossed the more exposed portions of highway, between patches of woodland. Their course, being around the low-hill-skirts, prevented either from discovering the other, while both continued under scrutiny of the concealed rangers above them. As they approached, Jasper saw that the force with which he must contend was at least double his own, while that of the party which Yancey waylaid consisted of only four mounted men, and a carriage drawn by two horses.

"In that coach, probably, is the poor lady whom they seek to kidnap, comrade," remarked the ranger; and her father, it is likely, rides with her; for those in saddle are all black, if my eyes can be depended on."

"The merchant's servants, I doubt," answered Blake. "But see! the troopers have entered the wood to the right of us, in the hollow. Think you they'll halt where they are till yon slow-dragging coach creeps round to them?"

"Hist! lie close!" was the ranger's rejoinder; and at that moment the sound of horse's hoofs galloping below them, struck upon the ears of both. Presently, the gallop subsided to a slower pace and in a few moments they heard the snort of a steed on the road from which they were hidden by the thick vines. Peering out, they beheld a rough-looking horseman, whom Matt Blake at once recognized as a late comrade of his own in Yancey's partisan band. This man drew rein at the brow of the hill, immediately in front of the cloven bluff which concealed the ranger, and appeared to discover the approaching traveling coach at once, for he uttered an exclamation, turned his horse's head, and clattered back as he had come.

"Thank you, master scout, for 'giving us just the bit of notice we wanted," said Jasper, with a smile, as he heard the hoof-beats lie away. "And now, comrades, let us make ready for our work." So saying, the brave ranger touched his horse's rein softly, and the

trained animal cautiously moved into the wood. Matt Blake followed, and as he rode up, Jasper stretched out his hand to him saying :

"I ask your pardon, for misdoubting you somewhat this morning. There's my hand, as a true comrade in the fight, and when that's over, you shall tell me what you like about yourself."

The outlaw took the offered hand, but no smile lit up his dark face, as, in response to the honest ranger, he muttered :

"I care not how hard and desperate the fight may be," and then rode on in silence.

The dozen rangers under Jasper's command stood each at his horse's head, bridle in hand, while their steeds cropped the sward. A few words from their leader sufficed to disclose his plan, and then the rangers moved slowly through the intricacies of the wood, passing its declivities by narrow paths, each horse led carefully. An hour was consumed in this descent, before they reached the valley plateau, and became aware that they were in proximity to a larger wood, wherein Yancey's troopers had halted, to await the arrival of their prey.

It was in good time that Jasper and his men were come, for the lumbering carriage was already creaking down the narrow road that bordered the woodlands, and ere they were fairly in the saddle, shouts and cries reached their ears, announcing the attack. The Sergeant and Matt Blake spurred forward, and in a brief space came in sight of the highway, while a succession of sharp shots were startling the echoes of the forest.

The coach had been stopped and surrounded. A dozen of the marauders were engaged in mastering the black servants, others held the horses, while others were grappling with an aged man, who, with pistol in either hand, stood by the coach-door, out of which he had apparently sprung to defend it. Robert Atnee was in the act of dismounting, while a negro servant held his bridle, and Yancey, reining his steed close by, had seized the bridle of another horse, whereon was the quadroon Fillippa, apparently bewildered with the scene. At least a score of the Tory's troops were drawn up in line, at the wood openings, and seemingly taking no part in the fray. One glance was enough for Sergeant Jasper, to reveal to him all. He whistled shrilly to his men, and with brandished saber, dashed at their head across the highway.

It was a gallant charge, and in a moment there was a *melee*. The onset was directed upon the troopers who were drawn up in saddle, and a half-dozen of these were cloven to the ground in an instant. Wheeling rapidly, the patriot rangers turned upon the broken line, and after unhorsing a few more, found themselves engaged in a hand-to-hand conflict with the entire troop of Tories, rallying under their Captain.

Matthew Blake's eye had singled out Atnee, and after the first sweep upon the marauders, he turned to confront the Tory, who remained on foot beside the carriage. Though still feeble from his

wound, he aimed a deadly blow at his enemy, who parried it with his own blade, and then darted behind the massy coach.

"Coward! Atnee! you escape not thus," yelled Matt Blake, wheeling his horse around, in pursuit. But at this juncture, the negro, who held the bridle of Atnee's horse, fired a shot at the bravo's steed, which brought him to his haunches, and Blake rolled heavily from his seat. The next moment he heard Atnee's voice from the coach-box.

"Quick, Juniper! the reins! the reins!"

Matt Blake, disengaging himself from the stirrups, struggled to his feet, in time to behold the carriage rolling away, his enemy Atnee lashing the frightened horses to the top of their speed, while curbing them with a firm grasp of the reins. Gnashing his teeth with rage, the outlaw turned on the black, Juniper, who had rendered Atnee such timely aid, and who was now in the act of mounting his master's horse to follow him. A fierce blow of his saber stretched the negro at his feet, and the next moment Blake was in saddle again.

But it was vain to think of pursuing the carriage. A fierce battle confronted him on all sides. More than half of Yancey's troop had fallen, but the remainder were fighting desperately, and five of Jasper's rangers lay dead on the highway. The dusky hollow in which they fought resounded with frightful cries, pistol-shots and saber-strokes. Blake found himself in a contest with three of his former comrades, and beheld his late Captain at a little distance, engaged with Filippa, the quadroon, who struggled in his grasp like a lioness, while he endeavored to manage both her and the restless animal on which she was mounted.

The rumbling of the coach-wheels echoed through the woods, and then suddenly ceased. Sergeant Jasper's voice was heard, encouraging the remnant of his little band, and immediately afterward, a half-dozen red-coated horsemen appeared advancing from the direction in which the carriage had disappeared. The Tory partisans set up a loud shout, and Jasper whistled to his men. Matt Blake, hard pressed by the marauders, saw his only chance was in flight, for he recognized the uniform of the new-comers as that of British regulars, belonging probably to the troops of Prevost, then on the borders. Spurring the horse which he bestrode, a few leaps placed him on the main road, and he galloped wildly away, his speed increased by the clatter of pursuing troops.

It was near sunset, and shadows crept up from the valleys and woodlands, announcing speedy twilight. The noise of battle grew fainter, but Matthew Blake could hear the hoofs continually following him. Thus he galloped for several miles, still descending into shadows, when suddenly the report of a pistol, accompanied by the shrill cry of a woman, caused him to check his steed and look behind. Scarcely two hundred yards behind, he saw the quadroon Filippa, with Yancey, the Tory, riding closely after her. The smoke of a

pistol which she had just fired circled over the girl, and Yancey's arm was just descending upon her head. The next moment, she fell from the saddle, and her horse galloped wildly past.

"A dastard blow," muttered Blake, with an oath, as he drove his spurred heel into the flanks of his steed, which, with one bound, brought him in front of the Tory leader. But before he could lift his sword to strike, as he intended, Yancey swayed in his saddle and toppled off, his feet entangled in his stirrups. Thus dragged upon the dusty road, he swept by in a moment, and Matt Blake found himself alone, on the darkening road, with the prostrate form of Filippa lying under his horse's feet.

"Is she dead or alive?" muttered the outlaw, as he threw himself from his horse, and bent over the white-robed girl. She had fallen on her back, and her face, half turned, was covered with blood, which flowed from a wound inflicted by the heavy sword-hilt of Captain Yancey. Blake placed his hand on her pulse, and found that it yet fluttered; then, exerting himself for the effort, he lifted her across the saddle of his horse, and thus sustaining her, directed his course from the road, into the deepening gloom of the forest. His quick ear caught the sound of a not distant waterfall, and with cautious march he proceeded toward it.

It was a mountain torrent, precipitated with incessant roar from the heights of the Hill Fork, over almost perpendicular shelves. Behind it the mountain was cloven, and on either side, the rocky walls were overgrown with mosses and evergreens. Blake speedily found a soft moss-grown bank, whereon he deposited his insensible charge, and with water from the cataract, and a few drops from his canteen, soon brought her to consciousness again. But he almost cursed himself for his officiousness, when he heard the first words shaped by her lips.

"Master Robert—thank God—I have saved you! Dear Master Robert!"

"Ay!" muttered Blake, between his teeth. "She is thinking of the stab she gave me, for her dear Robert—ha! ha!"

The short laugh sounded strange enough, in that dim place, with scarce light enough to disclose the face of either man or woman.

"Hist!" whispered the outlaw to Filippa; "be quiet, till you are stronger. Take another sup of the spirits, child."

"Where am I?" murmured the girl, feebly. "Master Robert! Master Robert!"

"'Tis no use calling *him*, he's far away," cried Blake. "But you are safe, wench, for all that; safer than with the master who sold you."

"Sold! sold!" repeated Filippa, with a shuddering moan. "Who is sold?" She attempted to lift her head, but sunk back feebly.

"No matter now wench: take another sup, and lie still, till I

wash and bandage that head of yours. 'Twas a savage blow, and might have killed you. Lie still, now."

Thus, roughly performing the part of a nurse, (how different had been his wont with another helpless one), Matthew Blake brought water from the fall, and cleansed the blood from Filippa's glossy hair—contriving to stop the effusion with healing leaves and a portion of his frock, which had served for his own bandages the night previous. Then, after picketing his horse, and making up a rude bed for the quadroon under the shelving rocks, he went out and sat under the roar of the cataract, with his head buried in his hands, to sink upon his dead Alice.

CHAPTER XII.

ROBERT ATNEE'S SCHEMES.

Full well he knew each mode of guile,
Each subtle snare, each specious wile.—SPENCE.

GATTAN, the negress left in charge of Laurelwood mansion, gazed anxiously after the cavalcade which had passed out of the shaded park to the highway. Many forebodings had the crone that her master was intent on matters which might bring no good to herself and Filippa; for the scene in Robert Atnee's saloon, the night previous, when the quadroon was summoned to drink wine with a brutal guest, had not failed to impress her grandmother with a suspicion that some understanding concerning the young slave existed between the Tory and Yancey the trooper. But she had breathed no word of doubt to Filippa; for she knew that the quadroon's soul was devoted to her master, and that the poor girl would resent a syllable spoken in doubt of him as a crime worse than treason to the king.

To Gattan, indeed, the strange passion of her grandchild had been long known, as well as the incessant watchfulness of Filippa over Atnee, which had twice interposed to rescue him from deadly jeopardy. She knew, too, that Atnee was aware of his slave's devotion, and that he could not but suspect, though he had never avowed it, the instrumentality of Filippa in saving his life; but the old woman was quite unequal to a comprehension of her owner's cold selfishness of nature, which made him the unscrupulous villain that he was. To her he had always been the "Master Robert" who had nestled in her bosom in infancy, and whose boyhood and youth she had gloried in. The hard, calculating, plotting Tory had ever veiled his real character in her presence; and it was not marvelous, then,

if she reposed implicit confidence in the promise he had long since made to her, that Filippa should never be parted from her, to go among strangers.

Gattan, nevertheless, was not blind. She remembered how Atnea had spoken, on more than one occasion of late years concerning his declining fortunes, and of the expense of maintaining his mansion at Laurelwood. She trembled to think that Filippa might yet be sold though never venturing to hint a possibility of it to the quadroon herself. But when Robert Atnee set out that morning, with the troop of Captain Yancey, and when Filippa, who was to accompany him, "to meet a lady," as the master assured them, mounted a horse and followed with the Tory's body-servant, Juniper, old Gattan's brain was filled with vague and troubled surmisings.

Poor Gattan! she had reason to recall her doubts and forebodings when, on the third morning, the wheels of a carriage rolled into Laurelwood gates, and her master presented himself in the drawing-room, bearing in his arms the form of a lady, pale and insensible, whom he placed in her charge with a few hurried commands. Filippa came not back with him, nor the *valet* Juniper, and to her inquiries concerning the quadroon, she obtained only evasive replies, which were worse than certainties of the young slave's loss.

But Robert Atnee, moody and fitful, took little heed of Gattan's anxiety. He gave directions at once to an old negro, his farm-overseer, to take charge of the plantation, during a long journey which he was about to make, ordered trunks and portmanteaus of his own to be packed, and announced his intention to set off immediately for the seaboard. But, dissimulating to the last, he assured Gattan that Filippa would shortly return, and in the mean time, and until she should hear from him, the household affairs were to be conducted as had been usual during his absences from the estate. At daybreak, the morning succeeding his return, Robert Atnee again set out, with the same carriage which he had brought, but with attendants selected from his most valued slaves.

Meanwhile, Gattan had learned but little from the lady confided to her care, and whom she knew as her master's cousin Louise. Enfeebled by previous illness, the bereaved wife of Ernest Riviere had lost all consciousness, at the moment when the marauders stopped the carriage, and her uncle sprung out to defend her; and when her senses returned, it was to find herself in company with Robert Atnee, whom she had not encountered since the night of her bridal, two years before. The crafty Tory played his part well. He represented himself as her rescuer from the Tories, and avowed his resolution to protect her, till the whereabouts of her uncle could be ascertained. A plausible story of arresting her carriage, as it was dragged furiously by runaway horses, sufficed to account for his presence, and he offered the shelter of Laurelwood, and an escort to Beaufort as speedily as possible. Louise was completely deluded, and though filled with misgivings regarding her uncle, confided in the promises of her cousin.

in Robert, that every exertion should be at once made to discover him.

The insidious Tory already began to exult in his influence over the widowed mourner, whose beauty, though softened by sorrow, recalled his passion of former years. But Atnee's ulterior object was a more powerful one. He had matured in his mind a scheme which was yet, as he trusted, to place him in possession not only of Louise, but of her fortune. He well knew that the king's forces were concentrating for the capture of Savannah and Charleston, as they had already overrun Georgia and the seaboard; and when the sway of Britain should be established, he doubted not that his claims to the forfeited estates of his cousin could easily be made good and a union with Louise insure for him the undisturbed possession of them. Louise was now in his power, and unsuspecting of his motives; and he hoped with specious reasonings to reconcile her ere long to all his purposes.

"Riviere is out of the way," muttered the plotting Tory, as he mentally revolved his projects; "her uncle will be powerless to protect her, and she is but a woman, after all. A few months in the West Indies, till affairs are settled here once more; and then, Robert Atnee, your star will rise."

So mused the master of Laurelwood, as he placed Louise Riviere again in her carriage, and with courtly gallantry placed himself opposite to her for their journey, as the deceived lady believed, to her friends in Beaufort. The coach passed from the park, and out to the highway, and Gattan, the housekeeper, was once more left in charge of the mansion.

Not long, however, was the negress to remain alone, for Filippa returned that evening, worn out, as if with suffering. She was escorted by a dark and travel-stained man, who had, as she averred, preserved her life. But how changed had the quadroon become during her brief absence. She only smiled faintly, when Gattan threw herself upon her breast in half-frantic welcome—smiled, and then kissed the plain gold ring which always gleamed on her left hand. The man who came with her was moody and silent, and stayed but to partake of some refreshments, then abruptly took his leave.

The next day Laurelwood resumed its routine, as far as the field servants, under the overseer, were concerned. But Gattan, the housekeeper, remained for hours shut up with Filippa; and the two, when they went about again, appeared no longer the same as before. The old woman grew feebler, and the quadroon seldom spoke and never smiled. Juniper, the black body-servant of Robert Atnee, returned shortly afterward, disabled by a sword-cut, and his story went over the plantation, that Captain Yancey and his troopers had been engaged in a great fight. This was all that transpired at Laurelwood concerning the ambushade of the Hill Fork.

Weeks passed on. Filippa's changed demeanor continued, her health manifestly declining. The strange man who had brought her

back, was seen, from time to time, by negroes of the estate, and it was thought that Aunty Phyllis and some of the field blacks knew more about him than they chose to disclose. He was sometimes seen in Aunty Phyllis' cabin, but oftener might be encountered in the swamp-woods near the plantation burial-ground. Stories were told of his having been seen lying on the new grave, under which "dummy" had been buried, and it was said he had made a dwelling for himself in a cave hard by, where the river skirted a high bank. Meanwhile, Robert Atnee remained absent, and no one heard from him.

CHAPTER XIII.

ST. AUGUSTINE CASTLE.

The prisoner, clanking his iron chain.—MANNERS.

WITH reeling senses, and a numbing pain in his side, Ernest Riviere rose to the water's surface, after falling from the *Acteon's* gangway. He had lost his grip of the man who had struck him, and whom he had dragged overboard in his descent; but as he drew breath, on emerging from beneath the waves, the heavens became suddenly illuminated, the waters boiled as a caldron, and a column of flame shot up, like a volcanic eruption. In the momentary glare he beheld a human face rise near him, and recognized the dark lineaments of that gunner at Sullivan's Island, whose life he had saved during the battle. But the next instant a chasm opened in the waters, and he felt himself drawn under, as in a whirlpool. When he again rose, it was to find himself in the midst of a mass of spars and timbers, the floating debris of the *Acteon*. He clutched instinctively at a large fragment of wood, and at the same instant beheld it grasped by another hand, and was once more face to face with the cannoneer.

The two men were almost in contact, as they clung to the timber, though the darkness which had succeeded the glare of the burning vessel prevented them from distinguishing one another's features. But Ernest Riviere, as he felt the man's gasping breath so near, could not help exclaiming:

"Comrade, why have you sought my life? I never saw you before yesterday."

"You saved my life, curse you!" muttered the other, savagely. "Why did you not let the ball do its errand?"

"Unhappy man, I have never injured you," said Riviere. "May God forgive you, and save us both!"

"Offer *that* prayer for your cousin, Robert Atnee," rejoined the gunner, savagely. "He pays—I stab."

Riviere, appalled at the bitter cynicism of the gunner, would have responded, but he felt the plank to which he was clinging suddenly pushed violently, and the man who had spoken was no longer with him. Immediately afterward, his narrow support encountered resistance, and, running against the sides of a line-of-battle ship, which was slowly swinging from her moorings into the rapid stream, he heard the cheery cries of men working the capstan far above, and, lifting himself out of the water, he raised his voice in a shrill cry for help.

Meantime, though Riviere saw him not, the gunner, who had left his hold of the plank, was swimming vigorously toward the lanterns of a tender which lay at a short distance, and reaching its bow-quarter, soon contrived to make himself heard by the lookout.

Not so easily did Ernest Riviere cause his voice to be heard over the din above him, and he felt the strong current bearing the plank which he grappled away from all hope of assistance. Once more, however, he desperately shouted, and was this time answered by a gruff "ay! ay!" from the vessel. Then all consciousness deserted him, till he awoke to sensibility in the cockpit of Admiral Parker's flag-ship, in the midst of wounded and dying sailors, the victims of that day's dreadful business.

Bruised and sore, from contact with the *Acteon's* floating remains, Riviere was compelled, during some days, to witness the sufferings of poor wretches, writhing under the surgeon's hands around him. When removed, at last, and questioned by his captors, the young patriot made no secret of his share in the conflict of Sullivan's Island; and the result was that he was required to take the oath of allegiance to England, or take the consequences of his contumacy.

"I submit, as a prisoner of war," was his reply.

"Rebels must be regarded as traitors, and can not hope to be recognized as prisoners of war," returned the Lieutenant.

And he was at once confined on the prisoner's deck, whence, in a few days, he was transferred to a tender, and conveyed, with other captives, to the castle of St. Augustine, in Florida.

Severe and abrupt was the change of life to which the young Carolinian soon found himself subjected. Immured in close, hot dungeons by night, and forced to labor on the fortifications by day, in lifting huge stones, and wheeling hand-barrows of sand, he realized those long and dreadful hardships which British tyranny made familiar to its victims.

The laborers were chained in couples to drag-logs, and Riviere found himself fettered with a fine, soldierly man, whose gaunt limbs and broad shoulders denoted great bodily strength, though his features were worn thin, like one overworked and scantily fed. The two toiled and slept together, their skins blistering under the fierce suns, their blood chilled by the night damps. They had but one

consolation in their misery, the knowledge that they were both countrymen and Carolinians.

So passed the weary months, for more than two years; Riviere's skin became bronzed, like that of his older comrade, and a heavy beard covered his youthful face. They had long since rehearsed their mutual story; but the Captain never wearied of listening to his honest yoke-fellow, Tom Irvins, the ranger.

"By the Continental Congress!" the latter would say, his favorite form of adjuration, "this wheeling stones, Cap'n, is wearing to soul and body. Faith, sir, if it wasn't for you, I'd escape or be shot by the sentinel."

"Most likely the latter would be your fate, my brave Tom," the young man would quietly reply. "'Tis not so easy to escape, I fancy, with a sentry's bayonet at every angle."

"I wish I had the butt of a bayonet in my grip, and this chain off, for a few moments, I'd do the business for three Britishers, or my name's not Tom Irvins."

"And be stretched on yonder sands with a dozen bullet-holes through you, poor fellow," rejoined Riviere. "No, my friend, let us wait a while longer yet. Our deliverance will come, in good season."

"By the Continental Congress, Captain, you give me some hope; but here we've been nearly seven hundred days, as I've notched on the rampart, yonder."

The conversation was interrupted by the sound of a cannon at the harbor's mouth; and soon after, the sails of a vessels appeared in the offing.

"More prisoners," cried Irvins, dashing his brown hand over his eyes. "God help our poor countrymen. Are they still fighting, I wonder?"

"Ay," answered Riviere, "and they will fight while a British hireling insults their free soil. We shall yet, Tom, behold our flag triumphant."

"God grant your words be true, Captain," rejoined the ranger; and they went on with their toil, in silence, till the hour for partaking of their meager noon-meal arrived, and they were marched to the barracks. After dinner, it became evident that the ranger's surmise concerning the arrival of prisoners was correct; for a new gang of unfortunates appeared in charge of soldiers. Captain Riviere, with his comrade, drew near to the foremost, and the brave young man almost swooned in encountering him. He leaped forward, dragging Irvins by his chain, and fell prostrate before the prisoner, he had recognized. "Father!" he gasped, stretching out his hands—"Father!—father!" and the captive, in return, uttered a low cry, and sunk beside him, murmuring: "Ernest, my son! my son!"

It was John Riviere, the merchant, who, captured by the British regulars after the attack of Yancey's marauders on his carriage, had been carried to the coast and thence conveyed to a transport bound

At St. Augustine, with prisoners. Here, after two years, the father and son found themselves united in chains, and to John Riviere his lost boy was as one risen from the dead. The meeting nearly overcame the old merchant, whose health had been already enfeebled by his confinement, and a sympathizing surgeon procured an order for him to rest a day, with his recovered son to attend upon him.

But the joy of their reunion was saddened by that which old Riviere was obliged to relate concerning Louise, the wife of Ernest. Since the moment when he sprung from the carriage, to defend her, the merchant had seen no more of his daughter-in-law. Struck down in the road, he awoke to find himself in the hands of enemies, and to bewail the loss of all he loved.

And when Ernest Riviere resumed once more his daily labor on the works with his father, whose tasks he joyfully lightened, and with Irvins, his long familiar comrade, the toil he endured was as nothing to the anxiety of his brain, continually dwelling on the dangers to which Louise must be exposed, alone and in the power of enemies, or wandering he knew not where. Thus wore on the doubly-tedious days and weeks of imprisonment, vainly whiled by mutual interchange of thoughts.

"Tom, my brave fellow, said the Captain one evening, as the captives, with pick and sledges, were engaged in fitting large stones in battered portions of the ancient wall, "let my father hear how you were captured. 'Twill take us back to home a while."

As Riviere said this, he heard a sob near him, from an old man, one of the new prisoners, who had been fastened to his fellow by a cross-fetter. The two aged prisoners were shoveling sand from a barrow. A frail-looking boy, the son of this other captive, was assisting them.

"Well, Captain," replied Irvins, "perhaps your father mought like to hear about it; but hang me if I can think on home and old matters without getting all a-fire again the Britishers and Tories. Howsomever, it's a short story." So prefacing, the ranger began his relation :

"You see, Captain, I'd all along suspected that cousin of yours, Robert Atnee, was a smooth-tongued Tory, under cover. So I set myself to watch when he came to camp, (like an old ranger knows how, Captain). Well, about that time a fellow jined us named Pappett—as outrageous a scamp as a chap of his size ever was. He used to keep a groggery on the river, and he was a precious coward too; so I knew he never 'listed to fight, and as for pay, you know, Cap'n, there was precious small chance of that under Congress officers. In consequence, Captain, I knew that Pappett must ha' jined us for some bad purpose; and mighty soon, I found out he was colloquying with your cousin Atnee, and that the two Tories were scheming to tote off all our General's plans to the Britishers. I suspicioned all that, and determined to make sure. But I kept dark, Captain, till the night Sullivan's Island was reinforced, and I expected

to get there; but I heerd Pappett was going to get leave, and I dogged him to an old oak-tree, where he met Atnee, and handed him some docyments. Off they went together, then, and as luck would have it, I followed, intending by hook or crook, to overhaul the Tory and make him deliver the papers. But that was the time the Tory got off, and poor Tom Irvins suffered. I gripped the fellow hard enough, but the devil took keer of him, and I found myself pitched into the mouth of Smith's creek, with a bullet in my shoulder."

The ranger rubbed his arm, as if the shot were there still, and Riviere remarked:

"So you were between drowning and dying by a shot, that time."

"Precisely, Captain; and it was a predicament, I assure you; for the water was deep, the banks were slippery, and my left arm was good for nothing. Howsomever, I struck out with my right, and kept myself floating on the current, and drifting down the channel, past town and fort, and getting to sea rapidly, when, all at once, I heerd oars. "Boat," says I, and boat it was, and a British boat, at that, cruising up to reconnoiter our works; but it saved my breath, and so I've got nothing to say agin it."

"And they took you aboard the fleet, to make you fight your own neighbors—eh, Tom?"

"You better believe, Captain, they tried to make me 'list for King George; but they found I wasn't the stuff they make Tories out of, so they pitched me into a tender, and here I am, yoked like a pet lamb, to you, Captain Riviere."

By the time Tom Irvins had concluded his recital, the sunset gun boomed, and the guard approached to release the captives from their log-chains, and march them to their supper and cells. Riviere and the ranger walked erect, though the day's toils had been severe. Old Riviere appeared weary and dispirited; but the aged man, his yoke-fellow, was pitiably weak, tottering along with one hand on the shoulder of his scarcely less feeble boy. His thin gray hairs were wet with huge drops of sweat.

At the doors of their cells the captives received their black bread and some beer, diluted with brackish water. They were then locked in to eat their bitter meals in darkness, after which they could lie down when they liked on the damp straw which was there laid.

Ernest Riviere had petitioned to be allowed to share a cell with his father, but no response had been vouchsafed to his request as yet, and he found himself again, with Tom Irvins, in the narrow dungeon, under the fortress, which they had occupied together during nearly the whole period of their imprisonment. The only light that penetrated it was admitted through a slit in walls of immense thickness—a few feeble rays, never sufficient to disperse the gloom.

Riviere and Irvins divided their loaf, and were eating in silence, when the ranger uttered an exclamation:

"By the Continental Congress," he cried, "they're making their

bread out of goose-feathers, I reckon?" And he held up the tube of a quill, which the ranger had drawn from his portion of the loaf.

"Let me look, Tom," cried his comrade, and taking the quill he scrutinized it carefully. "Tom," he said, lowering his voice to a whisper, "this quill is intended for us—there's a paper inside of it."

"What, Captain?"

"Courage, Tom! I think we have friends in the garrison; for I have already exchanged glances with one of our guards. Now, if I could only manage to read this scrap."

"Put it close to the light," said Irvins; "your eyes are sharp, Captain."

Riviere drew out a twisted slip of paper from the hollow of the quill, and opening it close to the aperture that admitted them light, contrived to read what was in substance the following:

SIR—Your father was a merchant of Charleston, and I owe him a good turn. Four pledged comrades relieve guard with the writer of this same, to-morrow evening. We shall have a boat under the wall, and when we strike off your log, jist you make for the boat, and we'll dhrove ye intil it. To-morrow night or never—courage and ah's well. A FRIEND."

"What think you, Captain—is it a decoy?" asked the ranger.

"Why should they wish to decoy us? No Tom, I think we have friends; but 'tis a desperate undertaking, to escape under the guns of the fort."

"There's not a vessel in the harbor, you know, Captain."

"That is true, Tom. Doubtless this emboldens them. Shall we attempt it?"

"Liberty or death, Captain," rejoined the ranger.

"'Tis desperate—but, Tom, I will ask my father."

The two comrades threw themselves on the straw; but there was little slumber for either that night. The thought of liberty kept them wakeful.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ESCAPE.

Oh, Liberty! can man resign thee;
Once having felt thy glorious flame?—MARSEILLAISE.

THE morrow dawned, and St. Augustine's castle prisoners were marched out as usual, in couples, to their toil—again to stoop over huge stones, wield picks and crows, and trundle heavy barrows. The sun rose over the fort, and so passed the morning.

Meantime, Captain Riviere communicated with his father, and the old merchant, already drooping under captivity, declared that to him death, in the attempt to escape, were preferable to existence as a prisoner. The young man felt his breast alternately swayed by hopes and apprehensions, for he could not but foresee the fearful risks which must attend the undertaking he contemplated; nevertheless, the fear of his father dying in a dungeon, and the thought that his wife was now left without a protector, combined to inspire him with resolution to attempt escaping. Tom Irvins heard his determination with satisfaction. The ranger was devoid of fear, and responded at once.

"Sink or swim, Captain, I'm with you." But, presently his honest countenance fell. "Look here," said he, with a glance toward the old prisoner who was chained with his feeble boy to the same log that confined the merchant Riviere. "What are we to do with them poor chaps? Not give them the slip, I reckon?"

"I fear there is no provision for their escape with us," answered Riviere.

"By the Continental Congress, we can't leave 'em here, Captain. Better let the old boy and his son go with you and your father, Captain, and Tom Irvins can rough it out here a while, I'll be bound. But that old chap, and his son both, will die, if they stay here, that's a fact, sir."

"Tom you must go with me, and the boat may not be large enough for more than—"

"No, Captain; I'll take my chance with the Britishers a spell longer, if so be we can't all get off. You must go, because your father would die without you, and you've got a sweet wife at home to look after, and I'm nothing but an old Indian scout, with an old mother at home. I'll stay, and keep up courage, thinking you'll come back, with Marion or Moultrie, and blow the infernal castle sky high, before long. That's it, Captain, precisely."

"No, Tom, we'll all go. Let us speak to the old man and his son at once."

The two captives heard the proposition with different emotions. The boy almost wept with new hope, and his slight frame straightened, as if capable of renewed hardship. His father's cheek flushed slightly, but speedily became pale again. Tom Irvins was puzzled at his apparent apathy.

"What's up, old gentleman?" cried he; "don't you want to get out of this blessed old rat-trap?"

"Useless!" murmured the captive, shaking his head, despondingly. "The place is guarded day and night at every point. No, we can never escape."

"But you can try," demanded Tom, dogmatically.

"Father," said the captive son, "we can die but once. Better to die in escaping, than be murdered here."

"The lad's right, precisely," said the ranger. "Where's the good in living like niggers? I say go, if we're shot for it."

"And we *may* escape, father," pleaded the boy.

"Precisely," continued Tom. "Nothing ventur'd, nothing gain'd."

"Father, let us venture—let us attempt an escape," murmured the youth. "Here we will die—we will both die."

The aged man trembled violently, as he cast a look of unspeakable affection on his child.

"I will do whatever you wish, my boy," he whispered. "You are all to me in this world."

Tom Irvins turned his head, for his eyes had grown misty. He had heard already that this father had beheld his roof-tree fired by British soldiers, and the mother of his boy murdered before him by Indian savages. The wrong had broken his spirit, and left his life hanging only on his love for this youth.

The sunset gun was now heard, and the corporal's guard approached with measured steps. Once more the prisoners felt their manacles drop on the heavy logs to which they were fastened; and then Captain Riviere and the corporal, an Irishman, exchanged glances of intelligence.

"Now," whispered the soldier.

"Now," echoed Tom, the ranger. And away, along the rampart-line, toward a point indicated by the corporal's hand, the fugitive prisoners ran swiftly, with the guard in apparent pursuit. As yet they made no noise, and their flight was unnoticed. Riviere, grasping his father's hand, felt his heart swell, as he crossed the sandy interval. Behind him pressed the youth, with his feeble parent, both inspired with new strength, in the hope of obtaining liberty. Soon they gained the sea-wall, and then threw themselves on their faces. The boat rocked beneath on the water, and in a moment Tom Irvins leaped into it and seized an oar. Riviere followed, with the merchant, and the other persons came next, with the British corporal close behind them.

"Come on," cried Riviere. "Freedom or death, now brave comrade."

"I'm with you, my boys," responded the Irishman, springing over the gunwale. Two soldiers followed him; two paused on the wall.

"In," exclaimed the corporal. But the two hesitated and drew back.

"Then, if you're faint-hearted, hand over yer guns," cried the determined leader; and in an instant he leaped back, and seized a musket from one of them. The other fired his piece in the air and fled; and immediately afterward a musket report was heard on the rampart above, where walked a sentinel. The flight was discovered, and there was nothing left but to row for their lives.

"Away, men," shouted the corporal, regaining the boat. "Pull, pull, ye devils, or we're all dead men."

The fugitives needed no second order. They bent upon their oars, and drove the light bark quivering into the channel, while behind them rattled a discharge of bullets, and the roll of a drum in the castle. Away flew the boat, springing through rapids, toward the harbor's mouth; and as the men strained to their work, each wide sweep of the oars caused her to leap as it were from the water, while a current setting swiftly seaward, accelerated its speed.

"Pull now, my boys, for your life and liberty. Look at the blackguards chasing us. But niver mind the bullets; now pull."

As the brave corporal spoke, a shower of lead fell around, and a body of soldiers were seen embarking to pursue them. As yet, they were inside of the battery's range, but would soon reach a point commanded by all the seaward armament of the fort. At this juncture, a moaning swell was heard on the surface of the water, becoming louder near the harbor's entrance. At the same time a great cloud rose from the horizon, spreading over the rising waves with pall-like blackness. Mounting higher, it seemed to swallow the twilight; and the men knew that it foreboded one of the sudden storms which rage so terribly on the coast of the Floridas.

"We are in range of the guns—the grape battery," cried one of the British deserters, in a frightened tone.

"Never you fear," replied the bold corporal. "If they scatter grape or canister, they'll be after hitting their friends, I'm thinking." He pointed to the pursuing boats, which, though somewhat scattered, were all exposed like their own frail craft to the castle guns.

"Pull away," again shouted the corporal. "Never mind the grape-shot, till it hits ye, my lads."

The twilight was disappearing—the bleak cloud extended its shadow; but the pursuing boats were gaining rapidly, and the runaways could hear behind them a summons to surrender. But no thought had they now but to escape or perish.

"Pull," cried the corporal, in deeper tones, and his comrades swept their oars unfalteringly. The foremost of the British boats was now within musket shot, and her officer was heard again commanding a surrender.

"Bring to, or I'll shoot you," he shouted. They returned no answer, but pulled harder. Then came a volley of musketry, followed by a cry of anguish. Ernest Riviere, supporting his father, and grasping the boat's tiller, felt that cry penetrating his soul; for it was the voice of the feeble old captive who had accompanied them; and who now strained to his bosom the bloody form of his young son.

The last gleam of light rested on the waters, and upon the desolate, gray-headed old man, who had sunk to the bottom of the boat, holding the boy in his arms. The youth's eyes were upturned to his

sire's face, and he pressed his delicate hand against his side, where a dark stream was pouring fast.

"Father—we are—*free!*" murmured the boy, with a last effort, and then sunk back gently and was dead; with a smile of peace upon his lips, as if indeed he were free forever.

The corporal glanced in the boat's wake toward their exulting pursuers, and dropping his oar, seized a musket.

"I've no heart to kill me ould comrades," he muttered, as he raised the piece to his shoulder; "but I'll shoot that officer, as I'm a living man." He fired as he spoke, and the British Lieutenant fell back at the tiller, which he was holding.

That shot was the salvation of the fugitives; for the pursuing boat, losing the guidance of her rudder, span around in the rapids, and became presently unmanageable.

"Pull, my lads, pull!" cried the corporal.

And as he grasped his oar again, a heavy roll was heard on the waters, mocking the feeble artillery of man. It was the thunder, crashing from the overhanging cloud, like ten thousand cannons, and shaking the ocean under its reverberations. The frail boat rose and quivered like spray upon the billows, then plunged forward like a grayhound, out of the black mouth of the harbor, to the wide Atlantic ocean.

CHAPTER XV.

THE OCEAN TORTURE.

Water, water, everywhere,
Yet never a drop to drink.—COLERIDGE.

A STORM upon the Florida coast is a battle of all the elements. Fire, air, earth and water, meet and dispute for the mastery of man. Terrible reefs and headlands hurl back the wind-ridden waves, and the black sky swoops down to belch out flame and thunder. Such a tempest encompassed that frail boat, freighted with death and life, which was swept out into the open sea, with its puny human pursuers left far behind in contest with the billows. The escaped prisoners were safe from the rage of man, but furious nature was still in their pathway.

The corporal and Tom Irvin, with the two other rowers, drew in their useless oars, and clinging to the gunwales, suffered the boat to drift before the gale. Riviere grasped the tiller, endeavoring to keep the prow seaward; at the same time that he sought to shelter his feeble father from the gusty spray that rose in drenching clouds

on either hand. The darkness became so dense that no one could see another face, and there was no word spoken by any one.

In the bottom of the boat, the old prisoner, whose son had been shot, lay like one dead, embracing his murdered boy—his arm wound about the cold neck, his lips pressing the pallid forehead. Neither wind nor wave, nor the roar of thunders seemed to disturb him; his numbed senses could realize but one sound, the death-shot that had made him childless.

Thus, during the long hours, the fugitives clung to their frail bark, praying, yet scarcely daring to hope, till the morning dawned, and by degrees the storm abated. Land was no longer to be seen, and how far they had drifted was impossible to surmise. All around was a wide stretch of ocean, glistening under the first glimmerings of day. Not a speck of land nor ship in the distance was to be descried, in all the watery desert.

As the sun rose above the horizon, the men began to look one another vacantly in the face, and their glances fell upon the desolate old man at their feet, clinging to his bloody burden.

"Murther! but this is dreadful," muttered the Irish corporal.

"But we are, at least, free—all of us," responded Riviere in as steady a voice as he could assume.

"Ay, and we must be men, and not give up, cried the corporal, suddenly rousing himself. "What d'ye say, b'ys? 'Tis thrue, we've nayther chart nor compass, but we've the sun to steer by, and the coast can niver be far distant, I'm bould to hope. So let's pull stoutly, sou'-easterly, and we'll make land before we think of it, b'ys."

The man who had pulled with the speaker laid hold of his oar, but his strength was unequal to the effort of wielding it.

"I'm beat out, Corporel Nevens," he said.

"Let's have a bit and a sup," rejoined the corporal. "Come, men, our biscuits will need no salt this bout."

The three deserters then produced from under their wet jackets a scanty store of provisions, three hard biscuits apiece; to which the corporal added a canteen of rum.

"We've got seven mouths so we must make seven morsels," said Nevens; "and a sip of the liquor for each. What say you, sir?" he asked, addressing Captain Riviere, who was supporting the head of his father.

The corporal's cheering voice and manner inspired his comrades with hope. Riviere nodded in assent to his proposition, and a single biscuit was divided into seven equal shares.

Meantime, the boat tossed upon the rough waves, and the chill spray beat over its low gunwales. The sun was an hour high, and its wandering beams were welcomed by the shivering fugitives, as they partook of the ship-bread. As yet, the old man at their feet had not lifted his head from the corpse, nor glanced once at the others. He cowered, as he had fallen forward, with his boy, to the boat's

bottom, his arms locked about the body, and, save for a shivering gasp, at intervals, might have seemed to be dead himself.

Riviere bent over and whispered to the corporal.

"The poor youth must be buried."

"There's a bit of sacking in the bows," responded the Irishman. "We might wrap the poor lad in it, and say the funeral service over him, sir; if so be you recollect it, sir. I'm afeard I don't, more shame for me."

"We can at least say a prayer," said Riviere, solemnly. "Will you speak to the old man?"

Corporal Nevens touched the father lightly, and gently signified his desire; but the bereaved man looked up fiercely, and drew the body closer to his breast.

"The sun is getting high," here interposed Riviere; "by noon the heat will be intense, and the body can not then remain near us."

"The Captain speaks truth," now spoke Tom Irvins, who was at one of the oars. "We must let the lad into the deep. And 'tis better, old comrade," he continued, laying a hand upon the unhappy parent's shoulder, "better for the child to be *there* than in a dungeon; he said, with his last whisper, you know, he was *free*."

The word "free," which had been the last on his boy's lips, caused the desolate man to break forth in more natural grief. "He's free!" he cried. "Yes, my boy is free! Oh, God!" And a torrent of tears gushed from his eyes over the dead one's face. The sympathizing men around participated in his sorrow, as they looked upon the youth's white forehead, his soft brown hair, hanging damp and heavy, and his eyes veiled by their long lashes.

"His soul is free, indeed," murmured Riviere. "Would that we were all secure and happy as this child!"

The old man's tears were a relief to his half-crazed brain. Presently, he raised himself on his knees, and covering his features with his attenuated fingers, appeared to pray with inward fervor, for a few moments; then, turning to Riviere, said, in a measured voice:

"Bury your dead!"

The young patriot felt his heart smitten by the words, for he reflected that but for him the boy and his sire would not have shared their flight. Tom Irvins marked the shadow on his Captain's forehead, and quickly whispered:

"Not your fault, sir; 'twas I that tempted the poor lad. And I don't regret it. No, thank God! He's free, and better off than we are."

"Ay," added Corporal Nevens. "Who can say what will become of each and all of us? or, more be token, what that lad have escaped? Who knows?"

No more was said, save a prayer, which Riviere offered, as the body, wound in a strip of canvas, and made fast to a heavy musket, was committed to the sea. The father wept no more, but sat silently

in the bows, his arms folded, his eyes closed. The sunbeams fell upon his gray hairs, but he took no heed; all that had warmed his withered heart was now cold.

At noon, another biscuit was divided, and a share proffered to the old man, but he quietly put it away. The flask of spirits was placed to his lips, only to moisten the parched skin. He would not drink. But his solitary fragment was laid by, while the men consumed their own scanty portions, and wet their mouths with a sup of liquor. This was the last of the second biscuit.

They now began to sink under the extreme heat; for the sun hung over them like a ball of fire. They had labored at the oars since day-break, but could yet distinguish no land, and as their energies became exhausted, the hope of gaining the coast grew feeble. It was evident that the gale had blown them into the channel of the Gulf Stream, and, after taking counsel with each other, they decided that it was better to remain in the current, which ran at the rate of four miles an hour, taking a northerly course, in which it was likely they might encounter some vessel.

But the night approached, and long hours of cloudy darkness transpired, bringing heavy chills, to succeed the torrid heats by day. Next morning they divided another biscuit, and contrived to rig up, with the muskets and their jackets, a sort of screen to shelter them from the direct rays of the sun; but this could not prevent the excessive heat from parching their tongues and throats. At first they had talked to cheer one another; and Corporal Nevens had told his story and recalled to the elder Riviere, how, years before, a poor private soldier, in the garrison at Charleston, had been sentenced to the lash for some trivial breach of discipline, and had been pardoned through the interposition of the good merchant, who, being on a visit to the commandant, commiserated the poor soldier, and begged his release. " 'Twas yourself saved me from the lash, sir," cried the corporal, "and I have never forgot it. So here we are together, sir."

But as the hours dragged on, the conversation of the fugitives dropped altogether, and they only looked in each other's faces, endeavoring to exchange sickly smiles—all except the childless old man. He never moved from the bows of the boat, nor seemed to heed the sun or chill. And so another day wore away, and no land nor a sail could be discerned. At evening a breeze arose, as they divided their fourth biscuit, and after awhile the moon arose, shedding her silver beams, which had been veiled during the preceding nights.

They even slept at intervals, but with uneasy dreams, from which they started sometimes, with stifled cries. Fatigue and thirst were breaking them down, and it was noticeable that the men of powerful frames, Irvins, Corporal Nevens, and one of the privates, suffered more than Riviere and his father, and the other private, a delicate man. The corporal's weak fingers trembled as he parted the fifth biscuit, at daylight. Blithe-hearted Tom Irvins smiled faintly, and

tottered as he received his share. The old man still refused his fragment of the bread, nor would even taste the small remnant of spirits, though Riviere held it repeatedly to his lips.

The third day was one of horror. The red sun seemed to rain fire upon them, scorching marrow and blood. They looked fiercely at each other, and read in their dry eyes what no tongue could speak—the thirst for WATER! Thirst! terrible thirst! the torture of the doomed in another world; the fire unquenched; the undying worm, gnawing and never appeased.

And still neither land loomed, nor a sail appeared.

When night came, the remaining bread was divided, and they ate the last morsel, and drained the last drops from the canteen, hardly expecting or caring for the next day. But hunger and thirst remained with them, and when another day dawned, and the sun rose high, and the heats beat on them, they were all starving men. Happily, one was delirious. The childless old man, who had refused to eat, and yet survived, was lying in the bottom of the boat, talking about his boy, and calling him pet names. “We’ll be happy, my Neddy,” he murmured. “We’ll escape and go back to your mother.” And he kissed the phantom of his crazed fancy, and patted the cheek, and parted the brown hair of his shadowy beloved one.

When the fifth day came, there was a strange glare in the eyes of all, and the two privates mumbled together, and whispered to the corporal, and Nevens spoke to Riviere, and afterward bent over the old man at his feet, to see if he was dead yet, for his comrades had spoken about *that* to him. For the first time, since his son was buried, the bereaved father raised himself and spoke; and his voice, though he had not eaten during four days, was stronger than that of Corporal Nevens. He looked at the two soldiers, and at Nevens, and at Ernest Riviere, who supported his father in his arms, and muttered:

“Do you want one to *die* for the rest? Let us cast lots, then.”

The five men shuddered, but in more than one pair of eyes the cannibal already glittered. Life was sweet, and hunger and thirst were more potent than humanity.

“Let us begin.”

Seven threads of different lengths were separated from a soldier’s jacket, and were then knotted together in a ball, with seven ends protruding. Each man clutched one of the fatal threads.

He who drew the shortest must die for the others.

Slowly the knotted ball was unwound by Corporal Nevens. One by one the threads separated. Then the cannibals measured the threads. That which Ernest Riviere held was the shortest. He had drawn the lot to die!

“I am ready,” said the young Captain. “Father, may God preserve you!”

“No, no, Ernest!” the old merchant feebly articulated, “let us all die together! Let us—” He sunk back, speechless and apparently dying.

And then it was seen that the eyes of the other father in that doomed boat were glittering as with triumph; as if he thought his boy's death was to be avenged.

"I am ready, comrades, God forgive us!" murmured Ernest Riviere.

But Tom Irvins, the ranger, feebly lifted his hand, and gasped for utterance. "*Me, Captain!*" he articulated. "*Me! I—I'll die!*" and then fell back exhausted.

Riviere bared his breast, saying: "I have drawn the death-lot—I am ready to die!"

As yet no one stirred, but every eye glanced again over the waste of waters, in the desperate hope that a sail might appear. But naught was to be seen, on any side; and presently the old man spoke up:

"I have the knife!" he ejaculated, sharply; and raised in his hand the knife which had divided the biscuit. "I am the priest!" he added, with a hollow laugh, while Riviere bent forward, presenting his bosom to the stroke. "Away!" cried the maniac old man. "I am the priest and the victim!" And in a moment the knife which he brandished was sheathed in his own withered breast. He fell to the bottom of the boat, and his last words gushed with a stream of blood from his lips; "Neddy, we are free!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BOAT ON THE OCEAN.

O'er the blue waters of the boundless sea,—BYRON

THE little brig *Ranger*, as staunch a privateer as ever displayed the Stars and Stripes at her mast-head, commanded by a gallant Captain, and manned by a brave crew, was cruising on the coast of North America, and picking up stray merchantmen bound for H. B. M. West India possessions, when her look-out suddenly gave the announcement:

"Sail, ho!"

"Ay, ay!" responded the First Lieutenant, from the quarter-deck. "Where away?"

"A boat, sir, on the larboard quarter—an open boat, sir."

"I see—and full of men," cried the officer, as he looked through his spy-glass. "Alter her course a point," he continued, addressing the man at the wheel. And in a few moments the *Ranger* was bearing down upon a dark object tossed upon the waters, which, on

nearer view, appeared, as supposed, to be a boat filled with men. But to the loud hail of the foretopman no answer was returned.

"Can they be all dead, Mr. Forester?" said Captain Wallings, the *Ranger's* skipper, approaching his First Lieutenant.

"I think I can see a movement, sir," answered the officer "Ay, they are making faint signals. Man the pinnace, there, and pull off to them—lively there!"

The ready arms of a half-dozen stalwart seaman sent the pinnace skimming over the waves, till it ranged alongside of the drifting boat, and a dismal spectacle was presented to their gaze.

Before them lay three lifeless bodies festering under the sun's rays. Two of them were clothed in British regimentals, and the other, which had been mutilated, was that of a greyhaired man. Four persons survived, lying together, under a ragged canopy of garments, in the boat's quarter; and one was able to move his hand to them, ere he sunk back exhausted.

The privateersmen made fast to the boat, and towed it to the *Ranger*. Then, carefully and tenderly, the four fugitives from St. Augustine were lifted to the vessel's deck, and conveyed to her cabin. It appeared as if the last sparks of life were trembling in their emaciated frames, till a sponge moistened with spirits, and placed to their mouths, recalled more animation, and gave the ship's doctor some hopes of their recovery. But his utmost skill was taxed, and many hours passed before he ventured to pronounce them beyond the danger of immediate dissolution.

Riviere and his father, strange as it seemed, grew better before either Irvins or the British corporal. The two privates had died raving, after satisfying their cannibal cravings, and the survivors had resigned themselves to starvation, when Providence interposed for their relief. In a few days, however, under the humane care of their preservers, all were able to thank heaven for renewed strength, and Riviere recounted to Captain Wallings and his Lieutenant their story of captivity and suffering. The brave seamen shuddered at the details, while they congratulated their countrymen on their double escape.

"And this British corporal—he is a determined fellow," said Captain Wallings.

"Brave and resolute, sir; and I shall never forget his devotion, nor that of my friend Irvins."

Weeks passed, however, before the rescued captives were restored to full strength. Meanwhile, the privateer cruised up and down, before light gales, till one morning the cry of "A sail!" was heard, and a vessel was sighted upon the weather-beam, which was soon made out to be a large brig, with all sails set.

"We are off the capes now," said Captain Wallings, "and I think your craft must be a merchantman bound for the Bahamas."

"If she be a merchantman, sir," replied the First Lieutenant, whose glass was at his eye, "she has, nevertheless, a half-dozen mouths to speak with us."

"Armed, Mr. Forester"

"Yes, sir; with at least our own metal," answered the second officer. "Doubtless a letter-of-marque, as she is merchant-rigged."

The war-drum beat to quarters, and the men piped aft by the boatswain, when a few words from Captain Wallings sent them with alacrity to the guns. In a brief space the decks were cleared for action, and, a smart breeze springing, the privateer was soon able to overhaul the strange sail.

"There goes a gun," cried Mr. Forester; "and there's the bloody flag of King George running up."

"Lay alongside, at once!" cried the Captain's cheery voice. "Board, and carry her, Mr. Forester!"

It had been late in the day when the chase began, and the sun was descending to the ocean's rim when the two vessels ranged yard-arm to yard-arm, flaunting the respective flags of England and America defiantly at their mast-heads. Immediately the conflict began, with an exchange of broadsides, mingled with the wild cheer of Britons and the wilder Yankee hurrah. The grappling-irons were then thrown, and Captain Walling's bold crew swarmed over the enemy's bulwarks.

At once took place a hand-to-hand conflict, such as was frequent in the fierce encounters of privateers in those days. The combatants grappled, discharging their pistols, and engaging with cutlasses and boarding-pikes, in deadly strife for the mastery. The letter-of-marque's crew, though unprepared for the sudden boarding attack of the privateersman, nevertheless defended their vessel gallantly, and almost repulsed the first onset. Again the Americans advanced, once more to be hurled back on their own decks, and yet a third time, to return raging to the battle.

"Away, boarders, away! Men of the States, give not an inch this time!" cried Captain Wallings.

"Forward, to repel boarders!" shouted the British skipper, in reply. "Sweep the Yankees from your deck, hearts of oak."

But the Yankees had made up their minds, this time, to remain, though they had underrated the force of their enemy greatly, and after a few minutes of fierce rivalry, the Britons retreated, step by step, on the slippery decks.

"Now, boys, one rush for the Continental Congress!" cried Tom Irvins, the ranger, who fought at the right hand of Captain Wallings.

At the same instant, Ernest Riviere dashed forward at the head of a reserve gang, and crossed his cutlass with that of a foeman. But the young American started, in surprise, to behold in his antagonist the form and face of Robert Atnee, his cousin.

"Instantly the recollection of that felon-blow he had received on board the *Acteon*, and the dark words of the assassin, ere he sunk, were recalled to the memory of Riviere, and he well-nigh dropped his arm in horror. But the recognition was as sudden on the part of his felon cousin. Robert Atnee started back, as if struck by a bullet.

His eyes glared from their sockets. There, before him, with sword uplifted, stood him whom he had believed buried fathoms deep beneath the sea. He gasped, and felt his hanger sinking from his relaxed grasp; then, overcome with terror, he turned and fled, at the instant that another rush of the privateersmen drove the letter-of-marque men across the decks.

Ernest Riviere, appalled for an instant, speedily regained his faculties and started in pursuit of Atnee's flying form. He saw him disappear at the companion-way, and without hesitation, plunged after him into the cabin beneath. But it was silent and deserted, and rushing forward, he encountered a heavy curtain. Grasping his sword more firmly, Riviere tore the drapery open, and beheld, not Robert Atnee, but a female, kneeling upon the floor, in prayer. She turned her head as he entered, and uttering a loud shriek, stretched out her arms, and fell at his feet.

It was Louise—it was his wife!

CHAPTER XVII.

ROBERT ATNEE'S PERIL.

From strand and soil, that lurid light
Gleamed baleful through the night,

THE PHANTOM SHIP.

THE privateersman following their bold commander, soon forced the letter-of-marque to surrender; and her colors were hauled to the deck by no other hand but that of honest Tom Irvins. The vessel's Captain had fallen mortally wounded, and half her crew were dead or disabled. But at the very instant when the sullen survivors flung down their weapons, in token of surrender, a wild cry rose from stem to stern that the vessel was on fire, and a moment after, flames and smoke were seen issuing from the hatchways. Captain Wallinga gave instant orders for returning to his own vessel; and now Tom Irvins, for the first time, bethought him of Captain Riviere, whom he had last beheld in the heat of conflict. Rushing back and forth, wildly inquiring for his comrade, the brave fellow was astounded to behold the young man suddenly burst from the companion-way, bearing in his arms the form of an insensible female.

"Captain, thank the Lord, you're safe!" ejaculated the ranger.
"The brig's afire! Make haste, for God's sake!"

"The magazine—the magazine!" here rose from a dozen throats, as friends and foes crowded to the gangway, and peered over the vessel's side to the *Ranger's* decks. In a brief space, all not actu-

ally dying with their wounds were transferred to the privateer, and her lashings being cast off, the American vessel swung loose, and dropped to leeward. Ernest Riviere, with his precious burden, sought the cabin which Captain Walling resigned to him, and the victorious officers after securing their prisoners, prepared to restore the trim craft to her usual order and discipline.

The sun had now sunk below the horizon, leaving only a violet dusk upon the waters. As twilight crept up, and crimson clouds changed to sable, the letter-of-marque fell off on the *Ranger's* quarter, and began to burn vividly. The flames broke from her ports, and ran up her masts and spars, until she soon presented a sheet of flame, which illumined the ocean for miles around.

Once or twice the privateersman, as they listened, fancied they heard a shriek arise from the doomed vessel; and some averred that they saw figures running over the burning decks. And so she drifted over the waters, while the *Ranger*, with all sails set, rapidly left her behind.

But there was, indeed, one survivor of that day's fight, whose despairing voice rung over the deep from the decks of the blazing brig. Robert Atnee was there, alive, yet blasphemously cursing his existence. Overcome with sudden and superstitious fear, he had fled from the face of Ernest Riviere, and sought retreat below; but unheeding his course, he had missed a step in descending the companion-way, and pitched headlong from the ladder, falling stunned upon the floor. Rapidly following, Ernest Riviere, in descending to the obscurity of the cabin, had not perceived the prostrate body which had fallen to one side, and the discovery which he subsequently made, after drawing the curtain before him, banished all thought of Atnee, or of aught else than his recovered bride. Consequently, the wretched Tory remained insensible and bleeding where he had fallen, till, aroused by smoke and flame, he gained his feet to find the brig deserted and on fire from stem to rudder.

It was a desperate situation, and the heart of Robert Atnee sunk within him, as he ran from point to point, to escape the blinding smoke and dreadful heat, which still seemed shifting to pursue him, as the vessel swung around. A breeze was rising with the night-clouds, and it roared through the flaming shrouds like the blast of a furnace. Atnee's clothing and skin soon became scorched, and his throat grew foul with particles of fiery soot. Death stared him for the first time directly in the face, and all the evil deeds of his life rose accusingly before him. Nevertheless, the Tory was not one to yield without a struggle, and though the fire raged everywhere about him, and his hands were crisped and burned in the effort he contrived to drag one of the vessel's hatchways to her taffrail, and securing some lines wherewith to lash himself to it, launched himself with this frail raft, upon the broad bosom of the ocean.

The blaze of the devoted letter-of-marque cast its glare on all sides, as the night wore on. Atnee, he guided his raft away with a frag-

ment of plank which he had secured for the purpose, could survey the expanse of waters for miles around; and he fancied he beheld the white canvas of the *Ranger* afar on the edge of vision. He gnashed his teeth as he recalled his late encounter with Ernest Riviere, and the abject fear which had constrained him to fly before the man he had wronged. Then, reflecting upon Louise, he wondered, in his bitter thoughts, whether she had been discovered by her husband, or whether, as his perverse nature prompted him to hope, she had been smothered in her cabin on board the letter-of-marque.

The burning vessel, meanwhile, was smouldering far in the distance, on the water's edge, and darkness presently settled around the narrow raft to which Atnee had fastened himself. He crouched partially upon his knees, in a painful position, fearing momentarily lest the swash of a wave, as the sea rolled, might sweep him from his frail support. Thus, through the long hours of night, tossed hither and thither, the wretched man swayed on a shoreward current, till the gray light of morning enabled him to discern, apparently very near, the sharp points of a line of reefs, and beyond a stretch of sandy shore.

The prospect of speedy deliverance banished at once from Atnee's mind a thousand reflections which had racked it during the darkness. Conscience ceased to worry him with her reminiscences, and despair gave way to resolution. He grasped the strip of plank which he had secured to the hatch, and employing this as both rudder and oar, began to urge his way toward the reefs.

But the shore which loomed so near, through the early mist, seemed to recede before advancing morning. Hours of hard toil, under the torrid blaze of the sun, were required to bring the raft within the outer reefs, and there the swell of the breakers threatened to submerge its miserable freight at every turn. All the hours of light were consumed, and when night came again, the Tory sunk exhausted on the hatch, his hands and limbs bleeding from contact with jagged reefs, and his body nearly paralyzed from his exertions, without food or drink, through the long day. But during the darkness he was cast upon the sands, and when another dawn appeared, found himself saved at least from the peril of drowning.

Weak and famished, Atnee eagerly devoured the contents of a few muscles which he dug from the beach, and set out to explore his whereabouts. He saw woodlands in the distance, and after some hours of toilsome travel over the arid sands, reached a forest of stunted pines, and shortly afterward the rude habitation of a turpentine-maker, where he found shelter and rest for the day, and to his satisfaction ascertained that he was on the mainland of Georgia.

Here, though foiled in his aims, and flung, after losing all, like a weed back on his native shores, the Tory congratulated himself that life and strength remained with his plotting brain. Here he had leisure to reflect upon the certainty that Ernest Riviere was living as well as the brave Matt Blake; and he doubted not that the young

Whig would soon reach his friends in Charleston, perhaps with his recovered wife. Jealousy and hatred tormented his evil thoughts, and he imagined a hundred ways of circumventing or destroying his cousin, each in turn to be discarded as futile. Thus passed his waking hours, while sojourning in the humble dwelling where he had sought shelter; and no sooner was he able to proceed than he set out for the interior. He had a few doubloons in his belt, which he had saved with his watch and some jewelry; and with the money he purchased a horse whereon to set out for Laurelwood, which he ascertained to be but a couple of days' ride from the headland where he had been cast ashore.

Robert Atnee never before experienced the chagrin and bitterness which now assailed him; for he had been accustomed to make every thing bend to his crafty schemes. Heretofore he had reckoned confidently on the ultimate possession of his cousin's property, but he now saw almost insurmountable obstacles interposing. His mind became a chaos, as he journeyed toward Laurelwood, but above all its tumult the one thought ever came uppermost—that Ernest Riviere must be got rid of—and that without delay, and surely. How or by what agency he could not resolve upon; but the circle of his reflections always returned to that point, and as the pivot of his wicked hopes in the future.

Sunset, on the second day of his journey, brought the master of Laurelwood to the banks of the river which ran through his own lands. He had but five miles to ride, and his way led by a pleasant road, skirting the stream, and bordered on the other side by woods which fringed the marshes. The afternoon had been hot, but a cool breeze arose as the sun was descending, and freshened the sultry atmosphere. The river surface reflected the purple clouds, and a golden haze filled the forest, through which the last sunbeams were slanting. Robert Atnee took no note, however, of the scene, but rode onward, absorbed in thought, till suddenly, as he reached the borders of his own estate, where could be seen some low hillocks of the swamp burial-ground, a hand was laid rudely upon the bridle of his horse so that the animal reared abruptly. Keeping his seat with difficulty, Atnee raised his loaded whip to strike at the wild figure which had sprung into the highway: but in another moment he was seized and jerked fiercely from his saddle.

"Murder! help! help!" cried the Tory, with a stifled shriek, as his throat was compressed beneath an iron gripe; but he was answered by a peal of laughter, which rung horribly through the woods, and as he lifted his eyes, he saw the face of Matthew Blake close to his own, and the outlaw's eyes glaring upon him in mad ferocity.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FILIPPA IN THE CAVE MILL.

A dram of poison—such soon
As will disperse itself throughout the veins.—SHAKESPEARE.

But it had closed over the plantation of Laurelwood, the field-slaves were in their quarters, and the mansion was dark, except a single apartment, on the ground-floor, where Gattan and Filippa sat together, at a table—the old negress plying her needle, while her grandchild, resting her forehead on one transparent hand, appeared lost in silent reflection.

“Mother,” said the girl, looking suddenly up, “do you think Master Robert will ever come back?”

“I’lease the Lord, yes,” answered the crone, raising her wrinkled face with a faint smile. “He’ll come back, and—”

“May it mother—he will bring his bride with him. Let us hope so, mother.”

“No be sure, dear—if you wish—and we must hope for all happiness to our good master, Filippa.”

The quadroon leaned back in her chair, and began to toy with the plain gold ring which gleamed on her forefinger. Gattan watched her attentively, and presently spoke again:

“You had the ring, Filippa, even if the vile trooper had carried you away, child. Would you have feared to use it, Filippa?”

“Feared, mother?” cried the quadroon, lifting the ring to her lips, and kissing it, “what has a slave to fear in death? When you gave me this ring, mother, I promised you it should be my protection against dishonor, come in what shape it might. I never forget that promise, mother.”

“Filippa,” said Gattan, with a curious expression in her glance, “what if our master—if Robert were to offer to harm his slave?”

“Alas! he can never harm me more than he has,” replied the girl, sadly. “Yet—against *him* even—I would not fear to kiss the ring, mother—for the last time.”

Uttering these words, in a low, melancholy tone, the girl slipped the ring from her finger, and pressing her nail upon its spring, caused the double circle to open, disclosing a hollow filled with some white substance, which she regarded closely.

“’Twas a good gift, mother, and sometimes I am happy in thinking it will give me a great sleep, when my heart can no longer bear its load. When you go, mother, Filippa will not be long in following you.”

"No, child; you are young, too young to leave the world. Life is for the youthful."

"But a slave has no life, mother."

"I have been a slave for seventy years," answered Gattan. "I have suffered as a slave, and yet I am old and cling to life."

"And you loved once, mother."

"Did I love?" muttered the crone, absently. "Ah, you say well. I did love, and your mother, my child, loved also, Filippa."

"And I love—alas!" murmured the slave girl.

She bowed her head, in speaking, pressed her small hands to her heart, and closed her lips, as with a spasm. But at this instant a tap sounded on the casement outside, and the crone started.

"Filippa, 'tis the wild trooper, the crazed man again."

"He will not harm us, mother; he wants food, perhaps. Poor, miserable man, he were better off to be with his child in the grave he watches all night."

The girl, she spoke, had risen from her seat and approached the casement.

"Have care, Filippa," cried Gattan, following her. "He may do us mischief."

"There is no fear, mother. Did he not save me once?"

Thus speaking, Filippa threw open the blinds and discovered the crouching figure of Matthew Blake, close under the sill; his long, shaggy hair hanging in elf-locks about his face, and his eyes gleaming like coals of fire.

"Hist," muttered the maniac as Filippa drew near the window.

"I want you; I have found him."

"What is it, Matt? Who have you found?"

"Come," responded the man, jerking his head, and pointing out through the darkness. "*He* is there, you know;" and then, in a shrill whisper, he added: "He *sold* you, you know—sold you for the other one."

"Oh, heaven!" murmured Filippa, pressing her heart with her hands. "Master Robert is come—do you hear, mother? Our master."

"Hist," muttered Matt Blake, "we are to have a feast—the red wine; we will drink the health of the dead. Come. I must away. I can not wait."

"I will go with him, mother, there is meaning in his words. Our master—Robert is in danger."

"No, Filippa, do not go. I fear this wild man; he is more dangerous than you think."

"Then I must go with him. I have power over him. Let me go, mother. Master Robert may be nigh—perhaps here."

Thus speaking, the quadroon flung a shawl over her head, and called out, "Matt, Matt, I will go with you."

The old negress vainly interposed her arm. Her impulsive grand

child had darted to the corridor, and was hurriedly following the madman, Matthew Blake.

The moon was struggling through gray clouds, now obscured, and anon emerging, but with uncertain light. Matt Blake, grasping the quadroon's slender fingers, drew her on along the dusky avenue of trees; and over to the edge of the wood, which skirted the negro-quarter. He strode under the shadowy boughs, and through the shrouded paths in silence, traversing the sloping ground which stretched to the river and morass. Filippa spoke to him twice, but the bravo returned no answer, except to tighten his grasp of her wrist. Thus they kept on for half a mile, till they reached a patch of thicket near the burial-ground, when Blake forced his way between dense masses of trailing plants, which grew rankly on both sides, and stood with his companion before a vacant building.

It was, as Filippa remembered, the locality of an old mill-house, near the river, which had long been deserted. The structure was of stone, and had been strongly built; but the stream had fallen and deprived it of water-power years before, so that it became useless. The walls were overrun with creeping vines, and the great wheel looked down like a skeleton, as the fitful moonbeams glimmered through it. But the low windows of the building were red with light, and as the outlaw thrust open the heavy door, and drew her over the threshold, she saw that the room into which they entered was illumined by several pine-torches, which cast their resinous glare around, and filled the beams above with dense smoke.

But there were other objects in the room, and one in particular which riveted Filippa's gaze. In the center of the room, she saw a table of rough pine, with a torch flaming at one end. A bottle and delf drinking-cup stood on the board, and a rude bench was beside it. On the floor, at a little distance, lay a human figure, bent double, and apparently bound hand and foot to a post which supported the roof. As the quadroon paused, bewildered and foreboding, this figure writhed and seemed gasping for breath.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Matt Blake, and halting in the glare of the flambeau, holding Filippa's hand in his iron grasp, he pointed to the struggling object. "Look you there, mistress; look you yonder, brave wench. 'Tis *he*—did I not promise you?—'tis the master that sold you for the other one."

"Oh, my God!" murmured the slave-girl. "'Tis Robert."

"He! said I not?" cried the bravo. "He will never sell you again; he will never sell Alice again for gold. Come, let us drink to the dead—to Alice." He drew the quadroon to the table, and forced her to sit beside him.

"Drink, wench; here is wine to make the heart merry. You are free, now; he will never sell you again."

"Matt, oh, Matt, you will not harm him; he has never injured you, Matt."

The quadroon murmured these words, scarcely knowing what she

said, all her thoughts concentrated on her master's situation, her eyes fixed upon the living heap in the corner, which appeared convulsed with contortion. But, in spite of her abstraction, she shrunk from the look which Matt Blake gave her, as he muttered, savagely :

"Wench, if he had a hundred lives to lose, they'd never be enough for Matthew Blake's revenge."

While the outlaw spoke these words, the wild glare in his eyes gave way to an expression of demoniac hate; and Filippa became aware that a settled purpose was conceived in his crazed brain. But in another moment, his laugh broke out, and, seizing the bottle of wine, he filled the solitary cup and shouted :

"Pledge, wench, pledge! You'll never be sold again, I'll promise you. Drink, drink, I say." And he placed the cup to her lips.

The quadroon felt her heart sinking, and her brain becoming giddy; but the sight of her master, writhing in his fetters, and in the power of a frantic enemy, called to her mind all the craft and resolution of her race. She suddenly seized the wine-cup, and echoed the outlaw's mad laugh.

"Ha! ha!" she cried, "let us drink, Matt. He will never sell me again." And she turned her large eyes upon him, brilliant as with joy, and kissed the rim of the cup.

"Good," cried Matt Blake; "you are a brave wench, Filippa—eh, Filippa they call you, my girl? Come, fill up; there's more where this came from."

Again he filled the vessel, and then hurled the drained bottle at Atnee's pinioned body. It struck the post and shivered into fragments. At this moment the quadroon slipped from her finger that heavy gold ring which she wore, and lifted her cup again.

"Matt, the wine is good," she murmured, softly; "'twill make us happy."

Blake took the drinking-bowl, but he saw not the poisoned ring which lay at its bottom. He drank, and returned it to her lips, with a tender grimace.

"Good wine glads the heart, wench," said the outlaw. "Filippa, you shall see how Matt Blake can hate, and how he can love, lass, if it like you. I've store of wealth, wench, fit for the best lady in the land. Ha! wench; do we not suit one another? Kiss the cup again, lass." Filippa raised the vessel and drank slowly.

"We must have more—another bottle, wench," he exclaimed. "But by-and-by—now for business."

He drew, as he spoke, a long, thin-bladed knife from his bosom, and held it aloft in the torch-light. Filippa uttered a stifled shriek, for she recognized her own stiletto, with which she had stabbed the man who sought to slay her master in the supper-room. The truth, which she had never suspected, flashed instantly over her mind, that Blake and the assassin were identical. But she mastered her agitation with a great effort.

"Let us drink again, Matt, my veins are on fire," she exclaimed, clasping the bravo's hand, and leaning her head forward, till it touched his broad breast.

"Plenty, wench, plenty," responded Blake; "but we'll first—aha! what is that? My veins are burning too, I swear! What's that roar in my ears, wench? May the devil—"

"Matt the wine is good; let us have more."

As Filippa murmured this, she wound her arms about the man's neck, and gazed up in his wild face with a look of well-simulated passion. The half-insane half-brutified wretch could not resist the expression of those dark, lustrous orbs, that seemed swimming with strange affection. He threw his arm about her slender waist, and pressed her to him, and bent to kiss her red lips. But at this instant Filippa snatched the stiletto and spung to her feet.

"Not my master!" she screamed; "not Robert, but yourself!"

"Wench! What's this—what's this flame in my eyes?" Blake rose to his feet, unsteadily. "Where are you, girl? 'Tis dark, the torches are going out."

"No, Matt; 'tis the darkness of death; you are poisoned," replied the quadroon.

"Poisoned!" echoed Blake, with a yell, as he dashed his palm across his eyes, which were dim as with blood. Filippa sprung from the table, uplifting her stiletto, but too late to elude the bravo's grasp. He rushed upon her, and with his huge frame staggering, fell with her to the ground. Twice her stiletto rose and twice it was sheathed in his breast, but he wrested it from her hand, as it was aimed for a third blow, and clasping her polished throat with his fingers, forced her white teeth apart with the point of the weapon.

Filippa was like an infant in the powerful man's grasp. She offered no resistance, as he dragged her to the table, and seizing the cup from which he had drank, forced the few drops which remained in it, together with the poisoned ring, into her gasping throat.

It was Matthew Blake's last deed; for even in the act, his massy chest collapsed, he drew a spasmodic breath, and fell heavily upon the floor.

Slowly and painfully Filippa raised herself, and beheld the bravo's blackened countenance close beside her.

"I have killed him," she murmured, "to—to save Robert."

She rose, then, while the swift fever began already to consume her. She seized the bloody stiletto, and hastening to the post, severed the thongs which confined her dear master. His mouth was distorted by a gag, and as she relieved him from it, the blood followed in a discolored stream.

"Awake, Master Robert—'tis I; you are saved."

The Tory's breast heaved convulsively, and his frame still writhed in agony. Filippa tenderly lifted his head, and wiped the blood from his lips. At last he opened his eyes.

"You are saved, Master Robert." She pointed to the dead bravo, lying under the glare of the torches.

"Ha!—Matt—dead!" gasped the Tory, as he began to recall his situation.

"And—I—I am dying, Master Robert."

"Dying?"

"Thus only could I save my master. *Twice* have I saved thee, dear Robert."

She sighed and sunk back. She had indeed given her life, poor girl.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LAST STRUGGLE.

Though all the fiends to whom thou art sold
Rise to thine aid, I'll keep my hold.—W. SCOTT.

On the 12th of May, 1780, the British captured Charleston, from which their armies had twice been repulsed. The American garrison marched out with the honors of war, and many Whig families retired with them, leaving the exultant king's men to possess their homes.

And when the last detachment of Americans had departed and foreign sentinels tramped their rounds from Cooper to Ashley river, there might have been noticed the figure of a man skulking in the dusk of twilight, near a bluff that overlooked the water.

This skulking man was Samuel Pappett, the former spy, who had since become a camp-follower of the British army under Prevost.

Never, since the brief glimpse he had caught of that glittering casket which Matthew Blake, the bravo, gloated over in his secret cavern, had the recollection of the treasure been absent from Pappett's thoughts. Sleeping or waking, his memory reverted to the ravishing spectacle of untold wealth his eyes had beheld for a moment; and many a project had he formed to return to Charleston, even while the city remained in possession of the patriots. But chronic cowardice is stronger than even cupidity, and the spy had never mustered sufficient courage to induce the risk of being recognized and punished as a traitor by the zealous Whigs who knew him.

But at last, Samuel Pappett followed the flag of his British protectors to Charleston, and on the night which followed the capture of the city, a night favorable for his purpose, being gloomy with threatening clouds, he cautiously made his way to the bank which had sheltered Matt Blake's cabin, now deserted and in ruins. The

spy's heart ~~avv~~ as he groped his way to the spot where he had concealed himself, three years before, while Robert Atnee entered the bravo's dwelling, but the locality was so pictured in his mind, that he found no difficulty in discovering, under thick masses of tangled vines, that narrow crevice through which he had peered into the hollow bank. He had provided himself with a pick, and lost no time in widening the aperture, so that in a few moments it was large enough to admit his body.

But here, an accident, which was nearly fatal, thrilled the man with new terrors. The displacement of earth with his pick had jarred the entire bank, and as he was about climbing to the opening he had effected, a great mass of clay parted, and fell with a heavy smash into the river, leaving him scarcely a foothold where he stood. Pappett shrunk back aghast, but avarice soon asserted her dominion, and he prepared to follow up his work, which had now indeed become easier, since the avalanche had partially exposed the whole cavern. He cautiously planted his feet on the crumbling dust, and dragging himself to the interior, hastily struck a light with tinder and matches wherewith he had not forgotten to provide himself.

Where, now, was Matthew Blake, the bravo and pirate, to guard that treasure, gained by many a crime? Where were the potent evil spirits said to brood over ill-gotten gold? Pappett, the coward, crept on, pausing every second and holding his breath to listen. But he heard nothing but the wind and river moaning. All within the cavern was as the grave.

At length, the spy, dragging himself on his knees around the cave, felt his hand slide into the aperture where he had seen the bravo thrust his casket; and presently his pulse leaped as his fingers came in contact with its rusty iron lid. The coward grew brave in lifting the chest from its hiding place, and he could have faced a regiment, as he hugged it to his bosom.

But suddenly a grating noise, as of a door turning on rusty hinges, and a tread as of feet advancing, caused a chill of terror to curdle the robber's blood. In another instant he saw the glimmer of a light strike across the cavern, and then, with a muttered cry, he dropped his own dim taper, and, clutching the casket tightly, crawled toward the outlet.

The damp, slippery clay seemed to ooze from under him as he proceeded, and presently he heard the voice of a man venting a loud curse behind him. He redoubled his exertions, and succeeded in reaching the brink of the passage, still grasping the chest, as with a vice. Here he paused, for immediately below ran the dark river, and above were black, hurrying clouds, driven across the sky. He gulped at the cool air, and drew himself cautiously up, but as he did so, a heavy hand fell upon his shoulder.

At another time, Pappett would have abandoned every thing for flight: but the possession of the treasure made him desperate, and while he hugged it with one hand, he drew a knife from his belt, and

struck furiously a backward blow at his pursuer. A groan answered him, and the grasping hand slackened but only for a moment. Another grasp was laid on his arm, and he found himself grappled by the man he had wounded.

At this juncture, while the two closed in a deadly embrace, a rift in the heavy cloud, permitted the May moon to look out for an instant, and illuminated the river, the dark bank, and the struggling men. Samuel Pappett beheld a hand, armed with a dagger, suspended above his heart. He saw, too, and recognized his antagonist, though his features were grimy as those of a corpse. It was his ancient employer and confidant—Robert Atnee, the Tory.

The uplifted arm descended, and Pappett felt the cold steel penetrating his bosom. He shrieked in horrible accents, and sunk back, but relinquished neither his hold of the casket, nor his clutch of Atnee's garments. Atnee in vain essayed to shake him off, and again and again he buried the dagger in his breast; but the wretch still clung to his treasure, answering only with shrieks, till at last they staggered and slipped forward, the earth trembled beneath the feet of both, and they toppled into the black river.

Leaves and brush and loose dirt covered the water, and for a few moments Pappett and his enemy struggled amid the debris, and then sunk together. The spy never slackened his dying gripe; and thus ended the life of Robert Atnee, the Tory.

CHAPTER XX

CONCLUSION.

THE pleasant mansion of John Riviere, the merchant of Charleston, had been illumined with old faces returned again, and echoed to well-remembered footsteps and music of happy voices. Old friends, gathering around Ernest Riviere and his fair wife, had listened to the story of captivity and perils which the elder Riviere was privileged to relate, when he sat with his children in their vine-covered porch. Moultrie and Marion, and other gallant ones, loved to mingle with the fond groups, and ever found gracious welcome there.

And when, after a happy year, the re-united family retired from before the invading British, and sought shelter in Philadelphia and when, after fighting four years under the eye of General Washington, Ernest Riviere saw the last army of King George surrender to the patriot chief; and when, at last returned to his ancestral domain, a blooming family clung about the young colonel's knees, the

story of Moultrie's defence, of St. Augustine prison, of the hatred and plottings of Robert Atnee, lost none of its interest, but was told and retold till it became a household legend of the Carolinas.

And when the war was over, Tom Irvins, the ranger, who had fought under the Swamp-Fox Marion, and the British corporal, Nev-ens, who had tales to tell concerning Paul Jones and many other brave comrades, came and rested under the vines and orange-trees of the old mansion; to join in the thanksgiving of the young Republic, and bless the proud banner of freedom—the Stars and Stripes.

THE END

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 A cure for good. One lady and two gentlemen.
 The credulous wise-acre. For two males.</p> |
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| <p>A successful donation party. For several.
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 Little Red Riding Hood. For two children.
 How she made him propose. A duet.
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 The double stratagem. For four females.
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